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*W. R. Riddell.*

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

TO

ENGLISH VERSIFICATION.

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# ENGLISH VERSIFICATION.

*A COMPLETE PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THE  
WHOLE SUBJECT.*

BY E. WADHAM.

---

O sing it to a subtle melody,  
That the sweet warbling cadences may fall  
Like dew about the flowers of fair poësy.

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LONDON:  
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1869.

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## PREFACE.

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THIS WORK claims to be an exhaustive treatise on English versification, giving a complete view of all measures, their nature, relative bearing, and application. Every possible form that English verse can assume will here be found indicated, besides every moot-point, such as the feasibility of naturalising the hexameter, fully and finally settled. It is shown how much too narrowly drawn are the accepted limits of verse, and from how much the poet has allowed himself to be debarred, from a great if not indeed, the better part of his domain.

In addition to the fact that this is the first treatise of the kind ever completed, it is also the first attempt to set native versification on its own basis as independent of the system pursued by the Greeks and Romans, on which the British muse has so long been unwisely affiliated.

To the blind regard for precedent at the bottom of the false method prevalent is to be ascribed the present most backward and unsatisfactory state of the art both in practice and in theory, and its non-attainment of

anything approaching what must be held as its due development. From time to time a very slight step in advance has been taken by some poet, in a slightly novel arrangement of rhymes, seldom more ; but the progress has been slow and painful to the last degree, that to this hour much is unaccepted and tentative what to have been fully known and worked two centuries ago would not have been early.

From this neglect and misconception that English versification has so long lain under, having had to delineate almost a new science, it has been necessary, like for an explorer in an unknown country, to give appellations to every landmark pointed out ; and here, be it said, care has been taken to render these as appropriate as possible.

A perusal of the present analysis will at once show, even to such as are comparatively unacquainted with the orthodox scope of English poetics, how much our national literature is likely to have suffered through want of some such induction to metric science as is now at length made attainable. It is hoped that this manual will in no mean degree serve to advance the proper study of the mother-tongue, only now beginning to receive in our schools and colleges some slight share of the consideration most justly its due.

To compare the number of hand-books that teem continually from the press, for teaching versification in Greek and Latin, with the utter dearth of books of the



like nature for English, surely, if better were not known, one would be for forming notions quite contrary to correct as to which were the dead speech, which the living. Surely this is a state of affairs other than in national honour it should be, and here at least is one step remedial. It remains to be seen whether the confidence in a general desire for better things which this publication implies has or has not been misplaced.

*January 7, 1869.*



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# ENGLISH VERSIFICATION.

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## I.

### OUTLINES OF METRE.

VERSE in the abstract is a system of proportion in which the poetic mind embodies its creations. The poet in all ages and all countries employs this plastic tool for the same reason as the musician observes time in music. The one deals with sounds, the other with words, the rhythmic weaving of which constitutes, with either, his art. Where the sense of proportion begins, there art takes its rise, for art and proportion are one: wherever, then, we can trace proportion among words, there we shall have verse.

From the outset none should make confusion between the terms 'verse' and 'poetry.' These are indeed for the most part used synonymously, but verse strictly is the warp and weft of the gorgeous texture, and might exist without poetical colours as easily as tissue might be woven without pattern or facing of any kind; the term poetry, on the other hand, only correctly belongs to the finished fancy bright woven in. Now with poetry proper—the soul of the Muse, so to say—we have little or nothing to do in this treatise save reflectively; our task is lower, less ethereal somewhat: we have her blessed body to anatomise.

So much for verse and poetry; now a few words for verse and prose.

Literary prose, at least with some writers, is to the full as artificial a product as much verse, and as far removed with

its balanced forms from the run of every-day speech; but in that it has neither return of sound as rhyme, nor fixed movement as metric feet, nor settled length as the line, nor reliable and regular cadence, all and each of which severally and together form the constituents of metre, the limitation between prose and verse is hardly ever matter of doubt even for the shortest space.

The most distinguishing feature of verse from prose is, then, that it has its proportions more clearly marked—is in fact more rhythmic. The line of precision between the two, which indeed all do not draw at the same place, it will be one of our objects to carefully delineate as we proceed.

All readers of poetry must occasionally in their lives have perused the first line or so of a poem before they fell into the run of it. For such few moments the verses were as prose to them. It is this rhythm, run, or sing-song, which is the most characteristic quality of verse, being in fact the manifestation of its innate proportion.

Verse read with this rhythm or run purposely ignored no longer wears metric semblance: could prose be of sufficient regularity to allow of being repeated in such-like rhythmic manner, verse it would become, even as the highest development of the same regimen transforms further into song, articulate or otherwise. There can be no uttered verse without something of this rhythm in the tone, even as there can be no song without singing, though excessive leaning to it be voted vulgar; a question of taste there is no call to arbitrate upon. Precisely as in song a tone is lent to words they do not otherwise possess, so in all verse is rhythm a change and modulation of cadential tone conformable to the metre.

It is in the simple natural fact that all exaltation is rhythmic that verse finds its right to existence, for rhythm conversely has a tendency to produce elevation, which of course is the desideratum of the poet.

We thus see why the ordinary distinction between prose and poetry is allowed to be determined by the outward sym-



bol of verse, suffered to rest rather on the form than on the spirit. The true spirit of poetry is often as marked in a prose writer as in a poet, sometimes more so for certain distances; but the systematic elevation of verse is the guise in which the instinct of habit teaches us to look for the genuine production, as we should for the king to the man wearing the crown. If so doing we are deceived, anger arises at the individual whose assumption of the symbol of royalty has misled us; and so it is the world has nothing but scorn for the undue assumer of the crown of verse whose claim is not warranted by performance.

For the manifestation of proportion, in one word rhythm, there must of course be some proportionate principle applied, which thus constitutes the metrical base of the verse. The nature of this base is dependent on that of the particular language, and may be of various kinds, the only requirement being metrical capability.

In English every word of more than one syllable receives a greater accent or stroke of the voice on one part than another: thus, simple, intelligenible, obligation, on the first, second, third syllables respectively, the voice invariably singling one with the strong beat. Also the words which consist only of one syllable have the accents one among another according to their relative importance. Thus if we say 'the leáves are fálling from the trées,' 'leaves' and 'trees' have a not less decided emphasis over their more unimportant fellows than the syllable 'fall' over 'ing' in the longer word.

This system of accentuation is an inseparable part and parcel of all our speech; and in fact the real life, movement, and soul of it. Of so great importance, and marking strongly place and place, it appears naturally to impart an idea of proportion, and lend itself to metric use, of which, as said, that is the ulterior principle.

The accents of a verse falling at regulated intervals divide it into what are called *feet*, the commonly accepted unit in most versification, which, however, should rather be the line.

The ways in which verse may be constituted by arrange-

ment of the accent are various: the foot may consist of two syllables or of three, and a very different effect is produced, according as one syllable or other of the number is the one emphasized.

But besides the accentual system, which we may look on as native, there is another, and rival, against which it has to make good its ground. This is the totally different base of quantity or prosody, on which the Greeks, closely imitated by the Latins, constructed the whole body of their poetry.

Prosody was a regulation of syllables by their vowels and consonants according to ease of utterance. We are accustomed to say loosely of this system, a vowel before another became short, one before two consonants long—a mere figure of speech, the vowel itself not being qualified by such considerations, only the syllable generally.

It seems strange to us how so subtle a distinction as that of time in pronouncing a syllable could ever have made itself felt, but it was probably accompanied by a cadencing of the voice in marked rise and fall.

The ways in which it was possible to arrange syllables two and three together by this method were many and various, but all those with which it is necessary for us to concern ourselves are these five, the most important:—

*Of Two Syllables.*

A spondee—both long  
An iambus—short long  
A trochee—long short

*Of Three Syllables.*

A dactyl—long short short  
An anapæst—short short long

Now, whatever the respective merits of the two systems, one thing it behoves, namely, not to confound them. This, however, appears rather to have been sought than avoided. Certain souls who saw nothing but Latin and Greek, or their reflex, in all the universe, hit on the happy expedient of calling the English feet by the above names, applied on this wise. Take an accented syllable to represent a long one, an unaccented a short, and arrange equivalents according, to go by the same names. The feet thus dubbed are then to be



deemed real dactyls, trochees, or what not, because of the nominal identity thus brought about, and are to be supposed capable of being put through exactly the same paces. A real dactyl is a very different thing from a three-syllabled foot accented on the first, a real anapæst from one accented on the last.

The ancient system may or may not be applicable to our language—that is a point for after regard; but this much is certain, we have an independent system which is not the ancient, and which should not always be liable to confusion with it by the retention of three or four mere unmeaning appellatives.

From this digression, entered into to show cause for the proposed innovation, we will now return to accentual feet, and state what names it seems most fitting to adopt instead of the prosodial, henceforth to be restricted to a quantitative meaning only.

For the two-syllabled foot with the accent on the close, by far the most predominant in the language, the term *march* is proposed instead of iambus, as indicative of the steady pace of verses composed in that metre.

For feet of the same length, but with the accent on the first syllable, instead of trochee the term *trip* or *tripping* will be employed, also indicative of the peculiar pace of the metre.

Of three-syllabled feet, that with the accent on the last instead of anapæst will be called *quick*, as essentially its metrical characteristic wherever employed.

With the accent on the opening syllable instead of dactyl, *revert* is suggested; perhaps not so inappropriate as it may appear at first sight, but anyhow it is a foot and term which will trouble us little.

As for spondee, it can have no accentual equivalent except with spondaic usage of weight, which makes it unnecessary to change the name. This foot may be dropped out of sight altogether for a season.

These four new names—march, trip, quick, and revert—are surely not too much to burden the memory with, and, as

has been shown, are neither unnecessary nor inappropriate : did we go on talking of iambus, trochee, anapæst, and dactyl, certain it is the confusion would be greater in the long run.

Owing in a great measure to the adoption of prosodial names for accentual feet, it has been far too much overlooked of what an utterly different nature the English foot really is. The weight of syllable, which in Greek is everything, in English is not meted at all, or only exceptionally by way of effect, but is left at the discretion of the poet, as we shall see every one of the other metric elements of verse without exception is in turn singly dropped or brought into prominence in various metres.

The English foot, as a foot, has regard only to the position of the accent : the syllables themselves are as slaves, incapable of self-assertion. The verse moves on with all its various tones perfectly unrestrained ; the regulating accent comes beating time at set intervals, and that is all. But the point at which it is wished to arrive is this—the extent to which this fundamental difference affects the combinations of the feet together in mixed metre.

Of the four varieties of foot described, two have the accent at the close, two at the beginning of it. This divides them into two natural classes, which tend to have their affinities among themselves, but are rather antagonistic one to the other.

The former of the two classes, namely, that with the accent at the close of the foot, is of vastly preponderating importance, the reason of which lies in the structural peculiarities of the English tongue, only by a right comprehension of which shall we see our way without error.

First, be it observed that much most usually the accent of a word of two or more syllables falls early : words accented otherwise are of course not rare, but few and far between in comparison to the mass the other way.

The accents, however, in their connection one among another tend decidedly to have the beat at the end of the foot. The two practices are not really opposed ; it is only in

perfect accordance that the accent of the longer words is thrown early : symmetry requires this tooting into the coming word as favourable to union and variety.

This fact of English innately leaning to that run of accents which places the stroke at the end of the foot, independently of other sources, might be gathered from the grammatical structure of the language itself, the unemphatic article and preposition coming before the noun, the pronoun and auxiliary before the verb, and so on throughout. These are but as bubbles on the stream of speech, but none the less unfailingly they mark its direction.

This mode may be denominated as the *forward* ; the other, or that with the accent at the beginning of the foot, as the *backward*.

As long as the shorter kind of feet are exclusively employed, this distinction does not tell ; the verse is kept unchangeable by a strictly alternating beat ; let however a single three-syllabled foot be introduced, at once elective affinities come into play ; the verse has, as it were, its choice offered which run it will take, and it invariably, with one exception (see revert, Ch. XV.), settles it in one way by declaring for the forward rhythm as opposed to the backward. Thus in the verse—

Sílent|lý a|bóve the | súrface,

there is no doubt about the metre ; but in that of

Slówly | lífting | the hóm | that húng | at his síde,

instead of continuing as it begins, with the accent at the opening of the foot, the moment the possibility of choice is offered the verse, it transfers the accent to the close of the foot, and no return afterwards to an alternate can make the rhythm revert back.

The verse may indeed be kept in the backward arrangement by force—

Slówly | lífting the | hóm that | húng at his | síde ;

but this is an unnatural procedure, and nought but the natu-

ral is true. Indeed, if it comes to that, and violence is to be done, the accent itself may as well be set aside outright. On this subject, in relation to the hexameter, see further, Ch. VII.

A very great assistance to the metrician arises from this natural leaning of the English language to one particular run: but for its aid, it would often be perfectly arbitrary in what way a verse were scanned; but this peculiarity causes all combinations, in spite of purposed arrangement to the contrary, to resolve into feet having the accent on the last syllable, the initial foot or feet of course not included. To this rule there is but one legitimate exception, already referred to a little above—revert.

The backward run rejected from the rule of metre gets installed on its lost throne when verse is fitted to music, asserting itself there with an exclusiveness quite sovereign. For in music, when words are fitted to any air, every bar as known must begin with an accented syllable, the primary part of any verse that does not begin with a beat being, as it were, cast off. Music treats the verse in corresponding way to suit its purposes, that the verse when master does the backward rhythm, which might perhaps as appropriately be hence called the musical.

Having now sufficiently discussed the foot, we will proceed to another question—that of pauses.

Every verse above the length of four feet has naturally a break of sub-division in its course. This peculiarity is technically known by the name of *cesura*, which means cutting: it originates in a modification of the same rhythmic force which causes the primary ordering of verse into lines at all, the most constant and important element in metre. The shorter a line, clearly the less occasion of pausing during its course; and therefore lines under what may be called the cesural limit, that of four feet, are left untroubled by its influence.

Pauses in verse are of two kinds—grammatical pauses, such as are found in prose marked for the most part by stops; and rhythmic pauses, or cesuras, which owe their origin to the



metre. In verse these for the most part coincide, though not always. Rhythmic needs obliging the cesura to occur where there is no grammatical pause expressed is the most frequent cause of their divergence, not any natural antagonism between the two.

Cesuras may be classed into two varieties—the fixed, or those that fall in settled places; and the less forceful, though equally important, which ring the changes up and down the line.

The final pause at the end of every verse is a fixed cesura, and the most important of any. When no stop accompanies this rest, it is described as the final pause of suspension, on account of a suspension of voice being the mode of denoting it under such circumstances.

Language in general is interspersed with little breaks, too slight for the comma to mark, and of these it is the cesura avails itself. The fixed cesura is a much more decisive pause than the shifting: to make it occur as some would, between such close connections as substantive and adjective, preposition and its case, or so on, is a barbarism quite unpardonable, except, indeed, in the grotesque, which excuses anything, even the division of a word, as in Canning's rhyme of

The tu-  
tor at the U-  
niversity of Gottingen;

or exceptionally between very short lines, where the ill effect is much modified. The lesser kind of cesura can in a great measure obviate an awkward pause by its power of self-adjustment, and even where it cannot, being less decided, it is less perceptible; that between substantive and adjective is even in some cases permissive,—nay, by imparting a tone suitable to the occasion, as in the following, even commendable:—

Where heavenly pensive || Contemplation dwells,  
And ever-musing || Melancholy reigns.

The effect of cesura in direct relation to its fixity and cor-

responding force is to impart a cadence, for the two members arising from its action bear to one another a sort of balanced arrangement of rise and fall.

It is always optional in verses that have the fixed cesura, whether they shall be written in two short lines or one long one; the words and import are of course the same whichever way written, but it is by no means immaterial metrically whether the full or divided form be chosen, if only from the cadence the long verse has additionally through the accompanying cesura.

The analogy between words and verses is close in this; the different aspect of monosyllables and polysyllables being an apt illustration of the contrast between what may be called single and double-membered verse.

When the subject is light and trifling, the lesser form may carry the day; when, however, it is otherwise, the longer seems the most befitting by far. The practice of subdivision carried to too great an extent has imparted an air of puerility to many an old ballad it does not rightly deserve, much as if long words were marked off into their component syllables to show the pronunciation.

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## II

### HISTORIC.—OLD ALLITERATIVE MEASURE.

THE first species of verse found in these islands since English began to be constituted is identical in structure with that of the Anglo-Saxons, depending solely on alliteration, or the recurrence of accented syllables beginning with the same letter. Most frequently these recurrent letters were the first in the word, but not when the accent fell elsewhere. The general rule was that in the first member of the verse there should be two such concordances, in the corresponding member one; but often the first member had but one, like the second, and sometimes as many as three; indeed, even in Anglo-Saxon the

regulation seems to have held very loosely altogether. The length of the members also varied very much—from four syllables to nine or so.

She was *brighter* of her *blee* || than was the *bright* sun,  
 Her *rudd* redder than the *rose* || that on the *rise* hangeth.  
*Meekly* smiling with her *mouth*, || and *merry* in her looks,  
 Ever *laughing* for *love* || as she *like* would.  
 And as she came by the *banks* || the *boughs* each one  
 They *louted* to that *lady*, || and *laid* forth their branches.  
*Blossoms* and *burgens* || *breathed* full sweete,  
*Flowers* *flourished* in the *frith* || where she *forth* stepped,  
 And the *grass* that was *gray* || *greened* belive.

If this be compared with an extract from *Beowulf*, the connexion in structure becomes at once apparent, though the number of syllables in the ancient are much fewer on the average.

*Straet* waes *stanfah* || *stig* wisode  
*Gumum* aetgaedere ; || *guth*-byrne scan  
*Heard*, *hondlocen* || *hring*-iren scir  
*Song* in *searwum* || *tha* hie to sele furthum  
 In *hyra* *gryre*-geatwum || *gangan* cwomon.

The old English example appears uncouth in our ears, but what is that to this? Surely the Anglo-Saxon lyre must have been a gridiron, or some instrument not more tunable.

The first great change wrought in this species of verse was the addition of final rhyme, as in the following, of supposed date about 1550:—

John Nobody, quoth I, what *news*, thou soon *note* and tell  
 What *manner* men thou *meane*, that are so *mad*.  
 He said, These *gay* *gallants* that will construe the Gospel,  
 As Solomon the sage, with semblance full sad ;  
 To discuss *divinity* they nought *adread* ;  
 More meet it were for them to *milk* kine at a *fleyke*.  
 Thou *hest*, quoth I, thou *loesel*, like a *lewd* lad.  
 He said he was little John Nobody that durst not *speake*.

This double regimen did not last long, the old alliterative system gradually breaking up. The next example illustrates this transition state.

In the third day of May to Carlisle did come  
 A kind courteous child that could much of wisdom;  
 A kirtle and a mantle this child had upon,  
 With brooches and rings full richly bedone.  
 God speed thee, King Arthur, sitting at thy meat,  
 And the goodly Queen Guiniver I cannot her forget.  
 I tell you lords in this hall I light you all to heed,  
 Except you be the surer is you for to dread.  
 He plucked out of his poterner and longer would not dwell,  
 He pulled forth a pretty mantle between two nutshells.  
 Have thou here, King Arthur, have thou here of me,  
 Give it to thy comely queen shapen as it is already.

The literary change from alliteration to rhyme was mainly coeval with the Reformation: preluded by Chaucer a century and a half before, even as the religious movement by Wycliffe, either revolution was long in becoming national and universal.

Besides the mere outward change in the use of modulants, to which attention has been drawn, a radical movement was taking place in the inner structure of the verse, which, if not quite so apparent, was of fully equal importance: this was the change from proportioning in the rough to the methodic reckoning by feet.

The accents at first having been used but as vehicles for the alliterative letter, a certain inequality and irregularity in their occurrence was not undesirable; but in proportion as rhyme became substituted, the uncouth numbers and inequalities of old were gradually toned down.

Early writers do not appear to have regulated the accent out of any other regard than the attainment of smoothness. Their aim appears to have been to reduce the disturbing influence of the accent to a minimum; and this, whether they would or not, could only be attained by placing the prominent syllables one remove apart. The effect of accents in this position was to beat time gently, without any elevations or depressions—a gain indeed to smoothness, but a loss to force and character.

Úp then stárted Kíng Arthúr, and swáre by híl and dále,  
 He né'er would quít that bold barón till hé had máde him quáíl.



Go fétch my swórd Excálibár, go sáddle mé my stéed ;  
 Now bý my faý, that grím barón shall rúe his rúthful déed.  
 And wén he cáme to Teárne Wadlíng benéath the cástle wáll :  
 ‘Come fórth, come fórth, thou pród barón, or yíeld thysélf my thráll.’

Here, it is seen, the accents have become strictly alternate ; but not as yet is there a thorough distinction made whether the accent fall on the first syllable of the foot or on the other.

To reckon, or as it is technically called, *scan*, the verse according to the number and position of the beats, appeared henceforward an obvious enough procedure. Whether or not suggested by a study of the Latin, the lines could be easily meted of any determinate length by merely allotting a certain number of accents to each. It was thus that English feet took their rise accentual from the beginning.

There appears to have been a slight struggle in the poetic mind of the period under discussion, whether the old rhythmic structure might not survive, even though alliteration itself passed away. In one rare instance, that of the well-known song of ‘The Old English Gentleman,’ we have an example of the old rhythm intact, or what so appears, but yet conjoined with rhyme. If this guess be right, to estimate the verse by the later contrivance of regular accentual feet is manifestly unfair ; it must be regarded as simply having the run of words before required to make prominent the alliterative letter.

An old song made by an aged old pate,  
 Of an old worshipful gentleman who had a great estate,  
 That kept a brave old house at a bountiful rate ;  
 And an old porter to relieve the poor at his gate ;  
 Like an old courtier of the queen’s, and the queen’s old courtier,  
 With an old lady whose anger one word assuages,  
 That every quarter paid their old servants their wages,  
 And never knew what belonged to coachmen, footmen, nor pages,  
 But kept twenty old fellows with blue coats and badges ;  
 Like an old, &c.

With reference to this kind of metre, see more under ‘main,’ Chaps. XXI. and XXII.

It now remains to treat in detail the various metres, which will be done on the following plan—march, trip, and quick severally, first unrhymed and then rhymed, the stanza forms subsequently apart. After that will come revert and all irregular and exceptional varieties, followed by examples of metres on other bases beside the foot.

A chapter on the rendering of Greek measures, and a slight summary, will conclude the work.

### III.

#### MARCH METRE.—BLANK VERSE.

It has been premised that the term *march* will apply to all measures of the alternate beat, the second syllable accented.

Though, presumably, verses may be composed of any number of feet in moderation, yet in pure metre, uninfluenced, that is, by rhyme, this is found to be anything but the case in practice; one form, and one only, being of any real value for sustained linear use in any rhythm. In the metre before us that variety is of five feet, the most used of all English metres, that commonly styled blank verse. The term blank to imply unrhymed has become special to this one form, from its having been the earliest and for a long period the sole of the kind used; perhaps, also, not without a certain sarcastic reflection on the metre itself.

Simple as the verse is in primary structure, it admits many varieties—in one phase the verse of Milton, in another that of Shakspeare.

Even about a metre so long and extensively in vogue as this, far from clear and correct ideas are abroad.

In the first place there are two standing varieties of blank verse, perfectly distinct, and having hardly a single particularity in common. These are the epical, strict and artificial; and the dramatic, free and natural. So far there is little difficulty in classification, but between these two varieties

there is what, to give a comprehensive name, may be called the idyllic, which, as its nature inclines one way or other, partakes of the characteristics of both.

Variation operates upon the verse through four channels: regularity or otherwise of the accent; syllables additional; arrangement of the cesura; and lapse of the accent.

To give an idea of blank verse in its ordinary aspect, take the following from Cowper—about an average specimen of the way in which it is handled by most:—

There is | in souls || a sym|pathy | with sounds,  
 And as the mind is pitched || the ear is pleased  
 With melting air or martial, || brisk or grave:  
 Some chord || in unison with what we hear  
 Is touched within us, || and the heart replies.  
 How soft the music || of those village bells,  
 Falling at intervals || upon the ear  
 In cadence soft, || now dying all away,  
 Now pealing loud again, || and louder still,  
 Clear and sonorous, || as the gale comes on.  
 With easy force || it opens all the cells  
 Where memory slept. || Wherever I have heard  
 A kindred melody, || the scene recurs,  
 And with it || all its pleasures and its pains.

Respecting the use of an opening accent in the line above, 'Falling at intervals,' it may be as well to state at once that it is an accepted interchange throughout all verses that by rule would begin otherwise, and is not to be deemed an irregularity, for without it all such lines would open alike, accented on the second syllable, much too uniform to be pleasing. To style this usage as the *strong beginning* may perhaps be the best way of phrasing it.

Midline the recourse to this figure, to obtain an opening accent, can be obviated by cesura at the half-foot.

Since Michael and his powers went forth to tame  
 These disobedient. *Sóre* hath been their fight.

But the form, though then somewhat irregular, is not inadmissible even here.

—— back defeated to return,  
 They worse abhorred. *Sátan* beheld their flight.

Or again:—

Where to lie hid. *Séa* he had searched, and land.

Dramatists and others use this licence without a full pause, or even stop at all, though not without cesura, for that cannot be obviated.

To be, or not to be, *thát* is the question.  
 Long lines of cliff *breáking* had left a chasm.  
 Cáve here, *húnt* here, are outlaws, and in time.  
 To pay the petty debt *twénty* times over.

This constitutes the first form of variation: to go on then to the second, or the change wrought by additional syllables. Tennyson uses such lines as

The prettiest little damsel in the port—  
 To feather toward the hollow, saw the pair—  
 Many a sad kiss, by day, by night, renewed.

But in the epic, a long narrative poem of an elevated character, additional syllables are rarely or never added, except under the figure of what is called elision; that is, where one vowel, mostly final, is supposed to cut off before another.

He ended, and his words their drooping cheer  
 Enlightened, and their languished hopes revived.  
 The *invention* all admired, and each how he  
 To be *the inventor* missed: so *easy it* seemed,  
 Once found, which yet unfound, most would have thought  
 Impossible.

The author of 'Paradise Lost' adopted this practice in imitation of the ancients, but whether he meant it to extend to actual pronunciation is another question. Certainly in one instance above, 'so easy it seemed,' such an opinion cannot be entertained: why then suppose it in others? Should we not rather acknowledge a quick foot of smooth utterance, as in

Throws his steep flight in many *an aëry* whirl,

where surely every syllable is expressive, and to be expressed? But be it remarked that the reason why the melody of this



verse is of a superior kind is simply because the elision passes unperceived—small praise this to the figure of elision itself, simply showing that it is to vowel syllables added on and pronounced, not to any cut out, that the praise is due.

Two vowels meeting in adjoining syllables do not suffer offence in English unless sung: witness the opening words of the quotation above, '*He ended.*' To slur away one vowel before another is, as a rule, inadmissible in speech, and to arrange metrically as if it could occur a consequent blemish. To insert a foot of three syllables, where one of two is expected, is a tacit assumption that such a foot can be pronounced in equivalent time, and tends to force an elided utterance, if in such an unfortunate situation the chance be offered. There may be a doubt as to which is most unpleasant, yielding to the tendency, or withstanding it, none whatever as to its general ill effects.

To point to the Latin as authority on this subject is idle. With an accented pronunciation elision is intolerable in that tongue too, and may have been even to the Romans for aught we can tell, though fashion made it go down, as to a certain extent with ourselves.

A vowel should never be cut out unless a word is thoroughly pronounceable without it. The word '*heaven*' is not so without the second *e*: in verse, then, it must count as a disyllable, however written. For the ill effects of supposing the contrary, see, with other remarks of the kind in quick verse where it concerns, Ch. VII. towards the end.

To cut out a consonant, on the other hand, often resolves a difficulty in pronunciation, not creates one; the use of *i'the*, *o'the*, to wit, for '*in the*,' '*of the*,' like *o'er* for *over*. Also the colloquiasms '*'tis*' and '*'twas*' may have something said for them as useful realities; but about a practice that would transform '*to highest*' into '*t'ighest*,' there is no need to enlarge further.

Decisively elision in English, on whatever principle explained, by whatever great name backed, is to be systematically avoided; for, to say the least, there is no beauty in it,

and occasional unavailability is its only excuse. 'The' is the only word with which the liberty should ever be taken, and the seldomer with that the better.

All alterations of words, such as yon for yonder, o'er for over, av'rice for avarice (bad), declar'st for declarest, with i'the, aforesaid, may be set down as poetic forms or licence; but mere suppression of such letters as *e* mute in display'd or in inspir'd, mere changes to the eye, are both absurd and idle as poetic peculiarities, not but that some phonetic reformation of English spelling is much needed.

In such a form as Cowper's, before given, 'where memory slept,' nothing seems gained by suppressing the *o* in memory, though it is an instance where the choice lies open.

Dramatists, not considering it incumbent on them to support a stately regularity, are altogether more free and easy in their style. An essential point is the admission of an extra odd syllable at the end of the line. In the highest class this is often the principal difference as far as syllables are concerned.

To be or not to be, that is the *question* :—  
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
 The slings and arrows of outrageous *fortune*,  
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
 And by opposing end them?—to die—to sleep—  
 No more;—and by a sleep, to say we end  
 The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks  
 That flesh is heir to—'tis a consummation  
 Devoutly to be wished.

The principle on which this usage may be accounted for appears to be, that, as only the number of accents, or at least of accentual places, are counted, this addition is metrically of little or no moment, thrown in; its bearing not so much that of anything added, as closely enclitic to the last word and accent it is entailed to. The name odd syllable over, or simply *odd-over*, will be sufficient to designate this custom for after reference. Uncouth if the proposed term be, it is surely outdone in this respect by the Greek term it is meant to supplant—*hypercatalectic*.

Without the freedom this usage permits, all the verses end alike on an accent, and from the nature of the language this at the same time tends to restrict the last word to a monosyllable with much too great frequency.

At present this freedom is strictly confined to the dramatists, but there is no reason why pursuers of any but the most exalted vein should not enjoy the same advantage. Why, as a general rule, the same argument against too great uniformity should not hold good for the needful variation of the close of verses as for that of the opening, let those who set rule above reason make manifest.

It is imperative that nothing added thus beyond measure should be in the least degree weighty or significant. If not a final syllable of no moment, then such trifles as ‘him’ or ‘me’ at their lowest.

The best and most commendable way of quickening blank verse by an interior syllable of any substantiality, and with no reference to elision, is, as it were, to repeat at cesura the procedure just instanced at the end of the line.

- Possess it merely. That it should come to this.
- Let me not think on’t. Frailty, thy name is woman.
- Better leave undone, than by our deed acquire.

Here, by acting as if the measure began again at the break with the strong beginning, while in reality there was the previous enclitic syllable remaining over from the first member, the additional syllable has, as it were, two feet in which to settle down, to the manifest preservation of steadiness.

An evident reflection cannot but arise from this in support of the allowability generally of the odd syllable over at the end of the line, and a further argument for regarding always a syllable in such position as enclitic to the preceding foot, with the closing word of which it either forms part or is inseparably connected.

The syllable thus gained is sometimes in the first member, as—

- The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead—
- Her people out upon her ; and Antony.

Even besides this, there is no place where the dramatists do not occasionally add a syllable of light weight—

Why not by *the* hand, Sir? How have I offended?  
And *am* fallen out with my more headier will.  
Go tell the duke and *his* wife, I'll speak to them.

Rarely two in one line :—

Where should this music be, *i'the* air or *the* earth?

The following is about as free a passage of the kind as any in Shakspeare :—

Admired Miranda!

Indeed the top of admiration; worth  
What's dearest to the world! Full many a lady  
I have eyed with best regard; and many a time  
The harmony of their tongues hath into bondage  
Brought my too diligent ear: for several virtues  
Have I loved several women; never any  
With so full soul, but some defect in her  
Did quarrel with the noblest grace she owed,  
And put it to the foil. But you, O you, &c.

As a whole, among the dramatists, there is less irregularity arising from additional syllables than might perhaps have been expected. The following, however, from Massinger, is an extreme case, where it is seen that the remove from prose is of the slightest nature.

I find in my counting-house a manor pawned—  
Pawned, my good lord; Lacy manor, and that manor  
From which you have the title of a lord,  
An it please your lordship! You are a nobleman;  
Pray you pay in my moneys: the interest  
Will eat faster in't than aquafortis in iron.  
Now though you bear me hard, I love your lordship.  
I grant your person to be privileged  
From all arrests; yet there lives a foolish creature  
Called an under sheriff, who being well paid, will serve  
An extent on lord's or lown's land. Pay it in:  
I would be loth your name should sink, or that  
Your hopeful son, when he returns from travel,  
Should find you, my lord, without land. You are angry  
For my good counsel: look you to your bonds; had I known



Of your coming, believe 't, I would have had serjeants ready.  
 Lord, how you fret! but that a tavern's near,  
 You should taste a cup of muscadine in my house,  
 To wash down sorrow; but there it will do better:  
 I know you'll drink a health to me.

For the words to be jumped down anyhow into fives seems here to have been held sufficient. To apply the term dramatic use to this is hardly fair, seeing that neither Shakspeare nor the best writers of a later day countenance any such extreme licence. The metre is perhaps as strict as the subject demands, but the point is whether confessed prose would not have been better, after Shakspeare's manner, where the tone is not sufficiently elevated for verse.

To go on now to cesura.

The pauses of a verse almost as much affect its tone as does the nature of the feet, having specific qualities of expression. A line without a stop at the end gives a sort of sustention; an unbroken line with final pause a sense of way and easement; a succession of such lines additionally so. A new subject begun late in the line gives a sort of catch to the breath, more especially if carried over into the next line without a stop; indeed, any pause near the end or beginning of a line has something impressive, but only in proportion as it is seldom employed. Take the following from Tennyson's 'Tithonus' in exemplification of these remarks, where the pauses used are in perfect accordance with the sentiment sought to be conveyed:—

Alas, || for this grey shadow! || Once a man  
 So glorious in his beauty, || and thy choice,  
 Who madest him thy chosen, || that he seemed  
 To his great heart || none other than a god!  
 I asked thee, || 'Give me immortality.'  
 Then didst thou grant mine asking || with a smile,  
 Like wealthy men || who care not how they give.  
 But thy strong Hours || indignant worked their wills,  
 And beat me down, || and marred, || and wasted me,  
 And though they could not end me, || left me maimed,  
 To dwell in presence || of immortal youth,  
 Immortal age || beside immortal youth,

And all I was in ashes. || Can thy love,  
 Thy beauty make amends, || tho' even now,  
 Close over us, || the silver star thy guide,  
 Shines in those tremulous eyes || that fill with tears  
 To hear me ? || Let me go : || take back thy gifts :  
 Why should a man desire || in any way  
 To vary || from the kindly race of men,  
 Or pass beyond || the goal of ordinance,  
 Where all should pause, || as is most meet for all ?

Some lines, it is seen, have two pauses ; but it may be everywhere noted that in this metre the strength of the cesura corresponds with the force of the stop—indeed, that in lines without any stop at all it is sometimes almost of doubtful position ; witness the sixth above.

Respecting the pause at the end of the line, that, as elsewhere said, is a fixed cesura ; and a most important distinction arises between having a stop at this point or suspension only, for on it depends the whole connection of the lines one with another, and a deal of the expression of the poem.

Milton inclines to put his longest pauses elsewhere than at the end of a line, except on conclusion of a paragraph ; and such practice tends to elevation and pomp of style. But were his sentences not in themselves elevated and swelling, were they short and concise so that the long stops came oftener and were more thorough, such a practice kept up would have a forced air intolerable. Homer's short statements could not be so arranged, and with judgment Lord Derby in his translation has not attempted it, but rightly followed a less elaborate style.

Milton proceeds on one even note throughout, and his example may be taken as the highest consummation of artificial arrangement.

To tabulate : 59 of his first 100 lines are carried over, vastly beyond the amount an ordinary writer could venture on ; 11 lines only close with a full stop or colon, 1 with a semicolon. The same kinds of stop midline are respectively 11 and 10. Altogether the pauses throughout are varied as much as possible, no regard being held superior or even equal

to that of setting them, turn and turn about, at due distances.

Unfortunately, as occasionally happens in other things, the artificial is not at the same time in all respects the natural: where the pauses do not wait on the expression, but the expression on the pauses, the perspicuity and evolution of the sentence, as might be expected, sometimes prove to a certain extent the sufferers.

The line, as a whole, it should not be overlooked, functionates as a proportional as well as its parts; but the unity of the line in blank verse is impaired in effect in the degree it is more slightly told off. The pause of suspension, though it indeed sufficiently marks the close of a verse, yet is by its very nature delaying; by a too great repetition of it the movement in this measure becomes tedious in the extreme. An appeal to Virgil's use with the hexameter does not lie fair, for both that is a quick metre and has a settled cadence to mark the run.

Be it understood this is not spoken as a condemnation of Milton: the object in view is merely to chart the track with all shallows, sunken rocks, lee shores, and the rest of it. If the author of *Paradise Lost* has triumphed despite such obstacles, so much the more credit to his genius; but these rocks certainly beset the narrows through which he steered, as many a bold navigator has found to his cost since.

The last count still remains to be disposed of—that regarding lapse of the accent.

Each foot by its constitution is supposed to have a beat, but as a matter of fact in many cases this is more nominal than real. Of such a verse as the one—

And feed upon the shadow of perfection,

how is it possible to say that the fourth foot has any accent at all? How, again, that the second and third have in this?

To images of the majestic past.

This subject is intimately connected with what has been

said before of the use of elision by Milton, and of occasional three-syllabled feet by all writers. It was mainly from the desire of obviating the dubious foot, from the striving to assure a capable syllable for each beat, that they took refuge in the other form of irregularity. In this piece, taken at random from *Paradise Lost*, Milton's endeavours to assure to each foot a true beat as often as possible will appear :—

Hell heard the insufferable noise ; Hell saw  
 Heaven ruining from heaven, and would have fled  
 Affrighted ; but strict Fate had cast too deep  
 Her dark foundations, and too fast had bound.  
 Nine days they fell, confounded Chaos roared,  
 And felt tenfold confusion in their fall  
 Through his wild anarchy ; so huge a rout  
 Incumbered him with ruin. Hell at last  
 Yawning received them whole, and on them closed :  
 Hell their fit habitation, fraught with fire  
 Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain.  
 Disburdened Heaven rejoiced, and soon repaired  
 Her mural breach, returning whence it rolled.

Here, and throughout the whole poem, though the shortcoming be not entirely obviated, yet it is to the utmost extent the language will allow. A second accent is supposed on polysyllables, as 'insufferable,' 'unquenchable;' one also on such slight words as 'and,' 'on,' 'in,' on the rare occasions when they usurp the situation.

The gist of the matter is that in reading we feel bound to supply some accentual stress even on the unsupplied places. Let this be impressed, for it will be found in no other variety than the dignified and formal, peculiar in fact to the epic.

Compare this extract from Milton with those from the drama given previously, and note the difference in this respect; compare it also with the extract from Tennyson. The line from the latter now—

To his great heart none other than a god,

receives no accent on such a capable word as 'than,' which is surely a tendency the contrary way.



Mark, too, the rapidity of utterance which accompanies the dramatic as opposed to the epic use, particularly in the very lines with the fewer accents. From this it appears that with still less restraint there would be a gain in liveliness further. Not the actual number of accents makes the essential difference, however, but the pitch of the subject in a different key, which in the stricter makes the accents direct the verse; in the freer, *differentiates them to the expression*, more after the manner of ordinary speech.

The more thorough way is not to scout this foot of mere accentual place, but give it its due, like any other determinate form, and turn it to the best account. The name proposed for it is the *hover*, as expressive of the unsettlement of the beat.

The knowledge of the different rhythmic movement which characterises the epic and the dramatic may supply us with a reason beyond that of barren regularity why the odd syllable over should be excluded from the former class; its disturbing influence would be very likely to upset the solemn sedateness which constitutes the claim of blank verse to dignity. The metrical division of few verses is so complete that the foregoing does not reflect on what comes after; a syllable over measure at the end of one verse necessarily quickens the opening of the next. The hover and the odd-over in blank verse are natural allies: where either is freely admitted, the other is with difficulty excluded.

The differentiation of the accent thus occurring is in reality equivalent to compounding the dramatic verse of different feet. In fact, in the drama, where any passion is shown, the feet, if not altogether transformed, are, as it were, fused into a totality and recast in utterance. Let any one declare if the same pronunciation accompany these verses in Hamlet, a tragedy, to what there would were they found in Paradise Lost, an epic. The difference of rhythm is most marked, the foot ordering quite put out of sight:—

O heat, dry up my brains! tears, seven times salt,  
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!—

By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight  
 Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May !  
 Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia !—  
 O heavens ! is't possible a young maid's wits  
 Should be as mortal as an old man's life ?

Singularly enough, the drama is precisely the point in which abettors of classic metres, as having their counterparts in English, deem themselves most firmly intrenched, the supposed affinity between modern and ancient being here deemed clearly established. The resemblance, however, is more apparent than real ; for iambic, or march metre, or whatever the designation, can only be applied to the free form of blank verse on sufferance.

The accents in blank verse regular, being placed alternately, are much nearer than their occasional, perhaps even than their average position in prose. Now the force of an accent greatly depends upon its distance from its neighbour, so that a regular succession of alternate accents must be far less forceful than the highest flights of prose. Understand, the rhythmic mechanism inherent to verse of all kinds will impart a kind of elevation and dignity that the prose does not possess ; but still the result will be accentually weaker. The dramatic Pegasus takes this curb between his teeth in spirited moments, which in a great degree makes up for the shortcoming.

It is here lies the true root of difference between the two extremes of blank verse ; occasional quick feet are as nothing to it ; for except in the degree they tend to bring about the free rhythm, they rank but as irregularities, good or bad, according to effect.

In spite of the great example of Milton and others, it cannot be admitted that blank verse has all the requirements necessary to a perfect epical metre.

It stands to reason that a measure that has everything ruled for it cannot be very expressional, while the movement is the slowest to which, under any circumstances whatever, verse or prose, the English language can be reduced. The strong beginning is too trite to be of account ; the extreme cesuras have lost effect by being used in common ; an occa-



sional quick foot rather disturbs than enlivens. What is there left? Nothing but the capital to be made out of the varying weight of syllables, which if in any metre it is of no account at all, it is this.

As to the propriety of writing an epic in the free form, it is true that in passages where the greatest elevation is attained the verse seems naturally to refrigerate into the stiff, regularly accentual form; but to strain at such everywhere alike without deviation is to drop all elasticity. Lamented Keats, in his unfinished poem of *Hyperion*, is a standing witness to the success of a more differential handling; without his indulging in any additional syllables, yet with admissible hover and unstrained pauses, to read him is a pleasure. His practice, then, seems a good model for such as may not elect to go to the very verge with Milton in all totality. Whatever course be pursued in poems of the more ambitious cast, yet in the idyllic, &c., particularly if of the domestic kind, where epical dignity is neither reached nor even aimed at, there seems no good reason for abstaining from any of the licence assumed by the playwright; indeed, such in reason is recommended.

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#### IV.

##### MARCH METRE, RHYMED.

RHYME, the well-known figure in verse, is the occurrence of two syllables similar in sound from the accented point onwards, as *sings wings, found rebound, engage rage*; or as *nation temptation, gladder sadder*, called for distinction double rhyme, or *witticism criticism* triple.

However, as a genuine rhyme is not always forthcoming, resources have been eked out by mere resemblance in spelling, where this by no means represents the sound, as *bear near, dialogue rogue, come home*, or even by certain approximations, such as *beheld field, road god, join confine, bear car*—all in Pope.

The use of rhyme in verse is not, as commonly supposed,

altogether for the mere clink thence resulting, but in the additional facility it affords of marking time. With rhyme for guide, the ear may follow inwoven lines with the utmost ease and certainty, while again the verses themselves marked off more decisively, having at the end instead of a mere cesural pause, which the attention in some measures (blank verse, for instance) is taxed to observe, a recurrent sound we hasten to arrive at, derive such a vigour and liveliness that the metre is no longer recognisable for the same. A closer consideration of rhyme, its nature and qualities, is deferred to a subsequent chapter apart.

The movement of rhymed measures being strictly regular, that is, having no tendency at all to differentiation, it is desirable that the accentual place should always be occupied by a syllable capable of receiving the beat; as this cannot exactly be, like in epic blank verse, a certain approximation is made suffice.

In treating the various forms of march metre rhymed, the first thing that most strikes the observation is the innumerable number of varieties met with, in place of the solitary if many-sided individualism just discussed.

In this chapter, not to make confusion, will be cited only such forms as are or might be used continuously in a poem of moderate length, without being divided into stanzas. It is true that many of the examples given might just as legitimately be written in lengths, and then called stave or stanza; distinction at this stage is but one to the eye at most, so it is deemed best to cite the most prominent forms here, where they can best be grouped.

Rhymed lines occur of all lengths, from even one and two feet, but only in stanzas with others of greater length; even lines of three feet hardly have a more independent existence, being preferably written in sixes, as, for instance, Wordsworth's 'Pet Lamb,' though, the piece being so simple, either way is equally suitable.

The dew was falling fast,  
The stars began to blink;

I heard a voice, it said,  
 Drink, pretty creature, drink!  
 And looking o'er the hedge,  
 Before me I espied  
 A snow-white mountain lamb,  
 With a maiden at its side.

Next, the *four-foot couplet* is a form that has been much used even for the longest poems, Butler's 'Hudibras,' for instance:—

A squire he had, whose name was Ralph,  
 That in the adventure went his half:  
 Though writers, for more stately tone,  
 Do call him Ralpho; 'tis all one;  
 And when we can with metre safe,  
 We'll call him so; if not, plain Ralph:  
 For rhyme the rudder is of verses,  
 By which, like ships, they steer their courses.  
 An equal stock of wit and valour  
 He had laid in; by birth a tailor.

*Four-foot quatrain*.—This, as well as all alternate arrangements, has a much greater tendency to be used in short pieces, ballads, odes, &c., than the couplet.

To fair Fidelie's grassy tomb  
 Soft maids and village hinds shall bring  
 Each opening sweet of earliest bloom,  
 And rifle all the breathing spring.  
 No wailing ghost shall dare appear,  
 To vex with shrieks this quiet grove;  
 But shepherd lads assemble here,  
 And melting virgins own their love.  
 No wither'd witch shall here be seen,  
 No goblins lead their nightly crew;  
 But female fays shall haunt the green,  
 And dress thy grave with pearly dew.—COLLINS.

Wherever rhymes are thus alternated, it may be remarked that the first and third closes should not approach in sound the second and fourth; the effect is discordant. The like applies to all interchanges of rhyme, whatever the arrangement. Verses of four feet are still more often alternated

with others of three, and rhymed to match, constituting, when written in short staves of four lines, the usual way, what is commonly known as the ballad measure ordinary. This form has perhaps had more practisers than any in the language. Very frequently, as here, the leading lines are left unrhymed :—

A second stroke so stiff and stern  
 Hath laid the savage low ;  
 But springing up he raised his club,  
 And aimed a dreadful blow.  
 The watchful warrior bent his head,  
 And shunned the coming stroke ;  
 Upon his taper spear it fell,  
 And all to shivers broke.  
 Then lighting nimbly from his steed,  
 He drew his burnished brand :  
 The savage quick as lightning flew  
 To wrest it from his hand.

The rhymes need not follow the arrangement of the verse, though such is the almost universal practice ; they may proceed, as in the following couplet rhyme, the length of lines alternating :—

Italia, by the passion of the pain  
 That bent and rent thy chain ;  
 Italia, by the breaking of the bands,  
 The shaking of the lands ;  
 Beloved, O men's mother, O men's queen,  
 Arise, appear, be seen !  
 Arise, array thyself in manifold  
 Queen's raiment of wrought gold.—A. SWINBURNE.

French La Fontaine has shown a great partiality for this mode, where those that list may see its working in lines of the most varied length and arrangement.

Next the *five-foot couplet*, a most important variety, commonly called for distinction the *heroic*, from the great use once made of it for compositions of the more ambitious kind, epic and other. This measure has been immortalized by the genius of Pope and Dryden, and a whole galaxy of lesser stars, only outshone by those two great luminaries.



But Pallas now Tydides' soul inspires,  
 Fills with her force, and warms with all her fires,  
 Above the Greeks his deathless fame to raise,  
 And crown her hero with distinguished praise.  
 High on his helm celestial lightnings play,  
 His beamy shield emits a living ray;  
 The unwearied blaze incessant streams supplies,  
 Like the red star that fires the autumnal skies.  
 When fresh he rears his radiant orb to sight,  
 And bathed in ocean shoots a keener light.  
 Such glories Pallas on the chief bestowed,  
 Such from his arms the fierce effulgence glowed:  
 Onwards she drives him furious to engage,  
 Where the fight burns, and where the thickest rage.—POPE.

First, now we have overpassed the limit of four feet, cesura becomes a point to be attended to.

In verses of this sort the pause is by no means of that abstruseness and variety which constitute so important a feature in blank verse, its fall being generally limited to the third foot, either at the actual centre or only one syllable off; that is, immediately after the fourth, fifth, or sixth syllable.

To instance these three positions:—

Trembling and pale, || he starts with wild affright,  
 And all confused || precipitates his flight.  
 As godlike Hector || sees the prince retreat,  
 He thus upbraids him, || with a generous heat.  
 Then let a midway space || our hosts divide,  
 And on that stage of war || the cause be tried.

But by no means is the position always the same in one line of a couplet as in the other:—

Thus, by their leader's care, || each martial band  
 Moves into ranks, || and stretches o'er the land.  
 With shouts the Trojans, || rushing from afar,  
 Proclaim their motions, || and provoke the war.  
 So when inclement winters || vex the plain  
 With piercing frosts, || or thick descending rain,  
 To warmer seas || the cranes embodied fly  
 With noise, and order, || through the midway sky.

Cesuras in the other positions than the three cited, though

rare comparatively, are by no means unusual; indeed, the approved pauses, though more pleasing individually, would soon become tedious if persistently adhered to.

Instances of the other positions:—

The immortals slumbered on the thrones above,  
All, || but the ever-wakeful eyes of Jove.

Swift as the word the vain illusion fled,  
Descends, || and hovers o'er Atrides' head.

Yet while my Hector still survives, || I see  
My father, mother, brethren, all in thee.

So spoke the fair, nor knew her brother's doom,  
Wrapt in the cold embraces || of the tomb.

These forms, except the last, never occur without a coincident stop.

An early cesura is often accompanied by a late one:—

O Argives, || shame of human race, || he cried,  
The hollow vessels to his voice replied.

An instance of completing the sense of one couplet early in the next is in Pope almost unique in its unfrequency; the effect of such an exceptional course is most marked.

From steep to steep the rolling ruin bounds;  
At every shock the crackling wood resounds;  
Still gath'ring force, it smokes, and urged amain,  
Whirls, leaps, and thunders down, impetuous to the plain,  
*There stops*—So Hector. Their whole force he proved,  
Resistless when he raged; and when he stopped unmoved.

Many writers, however, more freely carry over the sense of one couplet into the next, than Pope does even between the single lines of the pairs themselves.

This measure, as used by Dryden, had often a six-foot line intermingled, particularly at a close, till Pope put the practice somewhat out of fashion in his 'Essay on Criticism.' The fourth and sixth lines of his above are instances, also the fifth following.

The couplet is also occasionally varied by a triplet, though very rarely.



For Tydeus left me young, when Thebè's wall  
 Beheld the sons' of Greece untimely fall.  
 Mindful of this, in friendship let us join;  
 If heaven our steps to foreign lands incline,  
 My guest in Argos thou, and I in Lycia thine. }  
 Enough of Trojans to this lance shall yield,  
 In the full harvest of yon ample field.

The introduction of weak syllables in accentual position is regulated on these principles.

An available position can only occur before cesura when three complete feet precede; for the line cannot open weak, nor can a weak accent immediately precede the break: it can only fall therefore between these two:—

The spirit *of* a god || my breast inspire.

Of positions after the cesura, the emphasis falls strong on the first complete foot after the break: the least emphatic position, and therefore the most proper to select, is then the next that follows:—

Yet hear one word, and lodge it *in* thy heart.

Or if a place intervene between the cesura and the complete foot, that may be made available equally:—

If yet forgetful || *of* his promise given,  
 Then sighing, || *to* the deep his looks he cast.

*Five-foot quatrain.*—The alternate variety of five feet has met with many and illustrious supporters; but, as with the similar form of four feet, mostly in poems of no great length.

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,  
 The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,  
 The ploughman homewards plods his weary way,  
 And leaves the world to darkness and to me.  
 Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,  
 And all the air a solemn stillness holds,  
 Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,  
 And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds.—GRAY.

The following is an imitation of Dante's verse; a new rhyme always beginning before the close of the old, there being three

of a sort occurring alternately, the chain of rhyme is continuous—hence chain-rhyme might serve as its appellation. It is as if the verses were in triplets, and the mean of one trio became the extreme of the next. No original poem has been written in English in this measure :—

About the middle of life's onward way,  
 I found myself within a darksome dell,  
 Because from the true path I went astray.  
 Alas ! how hard a thing it is to tell  
 Of that dark wood so rugged and so bare ;  
 Anew I fear when there in thought I dwell.  
 Scarce death itself more bitterness doth wear.  
 Yet to make known the good which thus I found,  
 Now all my sorrows shall my tale declare.  
 I know not how I came within its bound ;  
 Such heavy slumbers on mine eyelids weighed,  
 The while I entered the forbidden ground.  
 But when I near a mountain's foot was stayed,  
 Hard by the ending of the vale, which now  
 With such sharp terror all my heart affrayed.

MRS. RAMSAY.

The next is an instance of blank verse arrangement in union with couplet rhyme, this latter being, as it were, supernumerary, not controlling the movement of the verse in the least :—

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever :  
 Its loveliness increases ; it will never  
 Pass into nothingness ; but still will keep  
 A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
 Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.  
 Therefore on every morrow are we wreathing  
 A flowery band to bind us to the earth,  
 Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth  
 Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,  
 Of all the unhealthy and o'erdarkened ways  
 Made for our searching : yes, in spite of all,  
 Some shape of beauty moves away the pall  
 From our dark spirits.—KEATS.

The following is an example of the same length line, treated with regard to its pauses and construction like blank verse, but still rhymed at irregular distances :—

My life was at its end—I died;  
 My last fond prayer was breathed to heaven for him,  
 And God had mercy on me; I was sent  
 To yonder star, where happiest spirits bide  
 In sunshine everlasting, and in bliss  
 Whose heavenly splendour never may grow dim.  
 Then came the sadness of my discontent.  
 On earth I knew not what was false or true,  
 But lived in dazzling mist like millions do;  
 Thinking what men call good was very good—  
 Alas! the word 's on earth misunderstood;  
 And then I knew my lover was misled  
 Like others, placing his sole happiness  
 In what was truly evil, &c.—E. KENEALY.

*Six-foot*.—The couplet of this length was used by Drayton and Chapman for the same purpose as the heroic verse, which later drove it out of fashion. It forms a measure with an ancient quaintness somewhat rude:—

But when the approaching foes still following, he perceives  
 That he his speed must trust, his usual walk he leaves;  
 And o'er the champain flies; which when the assembly find,  
 Each follows, as his horse were footed with the wind.  
 But being then imboast, the noble stately deer,  
 When he hath gotten ground (the kennel cast arrear),  
 Doth beat the brooks and ponds for sweet refreshing soil;  
 That serving not, then proves if he his scent can foil,  
 And makes among the herds and flocks of shag-wooled sheep,  
 Them frighting from the guard of those who would them keep.

DRAYTON.

Note here the difference between the pause of sense and the pause of rhythm. In the first line the sense requires a stop at 'following,' the rhythm would place it at 'foes,' and at the end of the line. Again, in the fourth verse, the stop after the word 'follows' is almost disregarded, the real cesura occurring mid-line after 'horse.' The like observation may be made in the eighth line.

In five-foot verse there is no divergence between the cesura and stop, the pause in sense coinciding with the other, and indeed determining its position; but here, owing to the greater length of line, the rhythmic force has become so much stronger

that the sentential pause must conform more to the rhythmic, or suffer for it by partial or total neglect in pronunciation.

*Seven-foot* is the longest form of march metre ever found, and that but rarely, it being commonly divided into the ballad form of four and three, already given. As used by Chapman in his translation of the *Iliad*, this measure would seem obsolete; but so much depends on the handling that in Macaulay's 'Armada' it seems as modern as any:—

The king is come to marshal us in all his armour drest,  
And he has bound a snow-white plume upon his gallant crest.  
He looked upon his people, and a tear was in his eye;  
He looked upon the traitors, and his glance was stern and high.  
Right graciously he smiled on us, as rolled from wing to wing,  
Down all our line, a deafening shout, God save our lord the king.  
'And if our standard-bearer fall, as fall full well he may,  
For never saw I promise yet of such a bloody fray,  
Press where ye see my white plume shine, amidst the ranks of war;  
And be your oriflamme to-day the helmet of Navarre.'

It is perhaps advisable to give a few instances of the use of double rhyme, as it modifies the expression of the verse considerably, adding to it a syllable over measure. Even independently of rhyme, this feature is always noticeable:—

Come ye so early,  
Days of delight?  
Making the hillside  
Blithesome and bright?

Merrily, merrily,  
Little brooks rush,  
Down by the meadow  
Under the bush.—AYTOUN.

The odd syllable over seen to occur alternately throughout adds much to the quickness of the measure wherever introduced; in so short a specimen doubly so, almost taking the sample out of march metre altogether into another group, for it is at once apparent that if the verses were written in couplet form, the last foot would from this cause be quick regularly.

Couplet use of double rhyme occurring constantly is rare:—



When from our ships we bounded,  
 I heard with fear astounded  
 The storm of Thorgerd's making,  
 From northern vapours breaking ;  
 With flinty masses blended,  
 Gigantic hail descended,  
 And thick and fiercely rattled  
 Against us there embattled.  
 To aid the hostile maces,  
 It drifted in our faces ;  
 It drifted dealing slaughter,  
 And blood ran out like water.—G. BORROW.

The sweetness of a lyric often greatly depends on this insignificant particular of double rhyme, but the close of any verse goes for much in the mental impression :—

Hugged in the clinging billows' clasp,  
 From seaweed fringe to mountain heather,  
 The British oak with rooted grasp  
 Her slender handful holds together ;  
 With cliffs of white and bowers of green,  
 And ocean narrowing to caress her,  
 And hills and threaded streams between,  
 Our little Mother Isle, God bless her.

HOLMES (American).

It is not meant to imply that this form gives sweetness, but that it imparts a certain heightening effect to the ground tone ; in the next and closing example, it is rather force and sublimity :—

O Lord ! who art our God, perfection's splendour,  
 We bow before thy thrones of cloud and fire ;  
 To thee, whose footstool are the heavens, we render  
 The joy and worship that our hearts inspire.  
 As leap the rills from the eternal mountains,  
 As the streams seek the everflowing sea,  
 As runs the fawn from the bright, cooling fountains,  
 So turn our fainting spirits still to thee.—E. KENEALY.

## V.

## . TRIPPING METRE.

TURNING now to the consideration of the metre, denominated tripping from the pace at which it moves, composed wholly of two-syllabled feet, with the accent on the first, it will be found much the same phenomena are repeated as in verses of the forward run, only on a less complete and elaborate scale.

In this metre, battling up, as it were, against the stream of speech, the accents are endowed with a greater average of distinctness than in the opposite run. Nothing of the nature of the hover is met with, every successive step being invariably accented, whether falling on words ordinarily capable or not.

In the unrhymed form this metre seems to incline most naturally to a length of four feet, best known by Longfellow's admirable poem of 'Hiawatha':—

Downward | through the | évening | twilight,  
 In the | days that | are for | gotten,  
 In the | unre | membered | ages,  
 From the | full moon | fell No | komis,  
 Fell the | beauti | ful No | komis,  
 She a | wife, but | not a | mother.

She was sporting with her women,  
 Swinging in a swing of grape vines,  
 When her rival, the rejected,  
 Full of jealousy and hatred,  
 Cut the leafy swing asunder,  
 Cut in twain the twisted grape vines,  
 And Nokomis fell affrighted  
 Downward through the evening twilight,  
 On the muskoday, the meadow,  
 On the prairie, full of blossoms.  
 See, a star falls ! said the people ;  
 From the sky a star is falling !

This, the blank verse of the tripping metre, has a daintiness about it which is most pleasing, requiring no prophet to



foretell that it is a verse of the future, even as that the minuets which Pope made his courtly couples dance together are of the past.

Any other length besides this of four feet is very rarely met with; of five feet hardly another example than the next. It by no means recommends itself so strongly as the shorter form :—

What is yon so white beside the greenwood ?  
Is it snow, or flight of cygnets resting ?  
Were it snow, ere now it had been melted ;  
Were it swans, ere now the flock had left us.  
Neither snow, nor swans, are resting yonder,  
'Tis the glittering tents of Asam Aga.  
Faint he lies from wounds in stormy battle ;  
There his mother and his sisters seek him,  
But his wife hangs back for shame, and comes not.

AYTOUN.

A six-foot unrhymed form would of course be practicable, but not being anywhere found, what shall be done or said about it?—

Poor verse slighted, six-foot baby, what a pity  
One of thy length should be hard up for existence.  
Can or not a hopeful, let us see, be fashioned  
Out of such material surely good for something ?  
I'm afraid for you, poor bantling, to speak plainly.  
O foreboding ! see where comes Sir Stern Cesura,  
Rudely claiming thee his vassal in fee simple.  
Like a grampus he hath seized thee by the wizen,  
Strangled and divided out thy skinny members  
Into little oblong dabs as dead as mutton !  
Force—entreaties—cannot save thee ; goodbye, baby,  
Only fit to serve in sonnet to a lady,  
Thy small pigeon-toes upsticking through the crust.

Neither is a form of seven-foot found, and would be equally unimportant if it were.

*Eight-foot* would be simply four-foot double, and perhaps better left as it is ; still, to exemplify, let us arrange a bit of 'Hiawatha :—

In the vale of Tawasentha, in the green and silent valley,  
 By the pleasant water-courses dwelt the singer Nawadaha.  
 Round about the Indian village spread the meadows and the cornfields,  
 And beyond them stood the forest, stood the groves of singing pine trees,  
 Green in summer, white in winter, ever sighing, ever singing.  
 And the pleasant water-courses, you could trace them through the valley,  
 By the rushing in the spring-time, by the alders in the summer,  
 By the white fog in the autumn, by the black line in the winter,  
 And beside them dwelt the singer, in the vale of Tawasentha.

---

*Rhymed forms* of the shortest kind occur, indeed, so very brief that it is difficult to class them; as this. Here, as often the case, the opening line is exceptional to the rest:—

I'm out and in,  
 Fetch the gin,  
 Open shop,  
 Squeeze the mop,  
 Toast the bread,  
 Make the bed,  
 Gut the fish,  
 Wash the dish,  
 Scrub the stairs,  
 Read the prayers,  
 Shell the peas,  
 Hunt the fleas.

*Three-foot quatrain*, most suitable for songs. Last line exceptional in run:—

Fill the bumper fair!  
 Ev'ry drop we sprinkle  
 O'er the brow of care  
 Smooths away a wrinkle.  
 Wit's electric flame  
 Ne'er so swiftly passes  
 As when through the frame  
 It shoots from brimming glasses.—T. MOORE.

As the measurement of this metre begins with the accented syllable first, and the number of feet is mainly determined by the number of accents; such a line as the first above, 'Fill the bumper fair,' in spite of the syllable wanting, may be

considered as one of three feet, as it has three accents. Whenever, then, in this metre, the verse ends on an accent, it will be a syllable short of full measure, including all, in fact, not double-rhymed; it may then be said to be *curtailed*, or *curt*.

*Four-foot couplet*; not much used:—

As it fell upon a day  
In the merry month of May,  
Sitting in a pleasant shade  
Which a grove of myrtles made,  
Beasts did leap, and birds did sing,  
Trees did grow, and plants did spring:  
Everything did banish moan,  
Save the nightingale alone:  
She, poor bird, as all forlorn,  
Leaned her breast up till a thorn,  
And there sang the dolefullest ditty,  
That to hear it was great pity.—SHAKESPEARE.

*Four-foot quatrain*.—Of comparatively frequent occurrence; but neither this, nor any of the others that follow, rivalling in that respect analogous forms in march metre:—

No one failed him! he is keeping  
Royal state and semblance still;  
Knight and noble lie around him,  
Cold on Flodden's fatal hill.  
Of the brave and gallant-hearted,  
Whom ye sent with prayers away,  
Not a single man departed  
From his monarch yesterday.—AYTOUN.

Here, as in most of the alternate arrangements of rhyming, it may be noticed that the first line is generally full measure, the second not, and so on in succession.

*Four-foot*, alternated with three, equivalent to seven-foot, if written whole length:—

It was Einar Tamberskelver  
Stood beside the mast;  
From his yew bow, tipped with silver,  
Flew the arrows fast!

Aimed at Eric unavailing,  
 As he sat concealed,  
 Half behind the quarter-railing,  
 Half behind his shield.—LONGFELLOW.

*Five-foot* alternate, a very pleasing verse, but hitherto much neglected :—

Spake full well in language quaint and olden,  
 One who dwelleth by the castled Rhine,  
 When he called the flowers so blue and golden,  
 Stars that in earth's firmament do shine.  
 Stars they are wherein we read our history,  
 As astrologers and seers of eld ;  
 Yet not wrapped about with awful mystery,  
 Like the burning stars which they beheld.—LONGFELLOW.

*Six-foot* couplet, alias three alternate :—

Love with rosy fetter held us firmly bound ;  
 Pure unmixed enjoyment grateful here we found.  
 Bosom, bosom meeting, 'gainst our youths we pressed ;  
 Bright the moon arose then, glad to see us blessed.—G. BORROW.

*Seven-foot*, not used, save divided into four and three ; already given.

*Eight-foot* couplet, a superior ballad measure, suitable for the highest occasions ; verging on the epic :—

In the valley of the Pegnitz, where across broad meadow lands  
 Rise the blue Franconian mountains, Nuremberg, the ancient, stands.  
 Quaint old town of toil and traffic, quaint old town of art and song,  
 Memories haunt thy pointed gables, like the rooks that round them throng ;  
 Memories of the middle ages, when the emperors, rough and bold,  
 Had their dwelling in thy castle, time-defying centuries old ;  
 And thy brave and thrifty burghers boasted in their uncouth rhyme,  
 That their great imperial city stretched its hand through every clime.  
 LONGFELLOW.

Linear intermixture of tripping and marching measure often occurs, of which the following are instances. In expression, they little differ from extracts before given, leaning, of course, to that run in which are composed the majority.

In the following they alternate, beginning with trip :—

When the lámp is shátttered,  
 The líght in the dúst lies déad ;  
 When the cloud is scattered,  
 The rainbow's glory is shed ;  
 When the lute is broken,  
 Sweet tones are remembered not ;  
 When the lips have spoken,  
 Loved accents are soon forgot.—SHELLEY.

Here the intermixture occurs irregularly:—

TO THE GRASSHOPPER.

Happy insect ! What can be  
 In happiness compared to thee ?  
 Fed with nourishment divine,  
 The dewy morning's gentle wine !  
 Nature waits upon thee still,  
 And thy verdant cup does fill ;  
 'Tis filled wherever thou dost tread,  
 Nature's self thy Ganymede !  
 Thou dost drink, and dance, and sing,  
 Happier than the happiest king !  
 All the fields which thou dost see,  
 All the plants, belong to thee ;  
 All that summer hours produce,  
 Fertile made with early juice.—COWLEY.

The body of Milton's Allegro and Penseroso is in this mixed vein, as also one or two other of his lesser pieces. Except in somewhat irregular pieces, this intermixture seldom or never occurs in modern poems above the length of four feet.

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VI.

QUICK VERSE, UNRHYMED.—CROWN.

HITHERTO attention has been confined to that class of metre which, whether the accent precedes or follows, does not, save exceptionally, overstep the limits of two syllables to the foot. The scene of observation is now to be enlarged, to include



that of three syllables, accented on the last. Again, as before, the unrhymed class will be dealt with first.

A metre wholly of three-syllabled feet is not found, except in short individual lines; it is therefore with quick and slow feet in combination that our concern will lie. The term quick will then suffice still to speak of the mixed verse as a whole, standing for what, if named at all before, went under the imposing designation of iambico-anapæstic.

There are two contrasted methods in which the different feet may be mingled together—that where the quick follows, and that where it precedes, besides, of course, certain intermediate gradations. That verse which follows one run or other exclusively is apt to grow wearisome after a time; the style, then, in which the two can best be made to work harmoniously together is likely to commend itself preferably to acceptance. The combination which has the quick foot at the close naturally possesses the greater fluency; be that, then, adopted as the base of procedure.

The length that it is most fitting for the measure to assume to functionate properly, for it cannot be regarded as a matter of choice, is six-foot, odd-over or not, at will. The last foot in the line will, as a rule, be quick, all the other five much at the discretion of the practiser, within limitations to be shortly specified.

This must be regarded as the true epic or heroic form, for it is the culmination of the system of accentual feet; the name proposed for it is hence *crown* verse. It might be said this is the true hexameter, and so it is the true English representative of the Greek verse of that name; but hexameter, only meaning six-foot, every possible form of the length has a certain claim to that designation; but even as commonly understood, there being already a claimant for the honour—one, too, for which another name is wanting, not coveting the term—let the present possessor retain it for its own, unchallenged; it will serve to denominate it by. That variety will come on for discussion in the next chapter.

Let us proceed now to instance the method in working:—

Bút oh, | Achíl | les, quél | thy hot wráth ! || how íll | it behóves | one  
 To háve a heárt quite déaf unto mércy. || Even the góds,  
 Fár as they aré above áll in vírtue, hónour, and pówer,  
 Are nót too hígh for forgíveness, || bút when besóught of a tíme,  
 With sácricé and with óutpour, || with sóothing gíft and atónement,  
 Will túrn agáin to the sínner || stépped asíde unto wróng.  
 And Práyers, théy are daúghters || of Zeús abóve in the híghest ;  
 Wáyworn and hált, || with dówncast loók || they fóllow on Évil,  
 Évil who, sóund-limbed and heárty, || éver outgoés them by fár,  
 Cóursing the eárrh, doing hárm, || which théy seek to héal, comíng áfter.  
 Whóso bids wélcome the lówly sísters || whén they draw nígh  
 Hímself their hélpful assístance recéives || in túrn at his cáll ;  
 But if ány man spúrn them, || and déaf remáin to the voíce of their súit,  
 They gó and beseéch their pówerful fáther Zeús, son of Crónus,  
 That Évil draw nígh to that mán, || and bríng him through wóe to think  
 bétter.—*Iliad*, ix. 492.

Here it is seen that in the opening of nearly every line we find but a repetition of the usages of blank verse; whether this peculiarity shall be local or general will depend on the user of the metre. One thing that tends greatly to produce this conformation is the obligation that any syllable over measure at the end of one line must be allowed for at the beginning of the next.

From what has been said elsewhere as to four feet being the cesural extreme in a verse, we attain this important limitation, that, instead of having to examine all possible combinations of slow or quick feet, any number together, attention in that respect may be confined to the cesural limit of four, after which point the numbers of a member of necessity begin again.

The phenomena remarked as occurring at the beginning and end of the above lines are found repeated with more or less strictness at the same points of each individual member. This is partly owing to the pleading tone of the given metrical specimen; but, altogether, it may be noticed as characteristic of the measure that, when once the quick foot has been engaged, there is a greater tendency to follow it up with another of the same sort than with a slow foot till cesura intervenes. This may be spoken of as a tendency to the *rise*.

It follows that, besides the measurement by feet, there is also a higher rule by components of the feet in rhythmic combinations or orders, counting from cesura to cesura. Leaving aside the question of speed, differences in this respect are the only real metrical differences made between one verse and another in regard to the succession of feet. It is of little matter which foot in the line is quick in comparison to which is quick in the order, and how it is succeeded.

The following, an exalted passage, has the succession of feet in the order to a great degree different from the last specimen, the quick foot being often succeeded by a slow, without cesura :—

- Morning now fresh from her bed from the side of princely Tithonus  
 Was rising, bringing the day-beam back to god and to man,  
 When to the clustering ships of the Grecians, Zeus, son of Cronus,  
 Sent forth fell Strife, uplifting the gleaming beacon of war.  
 5 On the deep-hulled ship of Ulysses direful took she her stand,  
 There amid host to be heard by all on both sides around,  
 From the tents of Telamonian Ajax, off unto those  
 Of Achilles, heroes who in their strength and manhood a-trust  
 Had their trim seafaring galleys updrawn the outmost of all.  
 10 There standing, the goddess with high-pitched voice shouted out to  
 the Greeks,  
 Loud stirringly shouted, and set such thews in every breast  
 For war and still war, that at once it became to them sweeter to  
 battle,  
 Than to sail back in the hollow-ribbed ships to the loved land of  
 home.—*Iliad*, xi. 1.

But even here the actual number of members that have a slow foot following on a quick one, immediately precedent to a cesura constituting what may be called a *fall*, is comparatively few, only in the 2nd, 6th, and 10th verses, and none of these at the end of the line.

Of course, the last foot may be slow occasionally as well as any other, though of three syllables in ordinary :—

- A quarrel over the head of the boar and his bristly hide—
- Over the others standing by head and by shoulders broad.—
- Then waxed the joy of that hero like of a hungry lion—
- And honour will keep me unmoved at the galleys, as long as breath—
- Prayed then aloud the Grecian monarch with outstretched hands.—



But verses of this kind do not seem to readily intermix in any numbers with the others. The extent to which they may be introduced is a matter of individual taste, nor need it be the same in all cases. The effect is hardly spondaic, except where, as in the last line, unusual weight of syllables concurs.

The sing-song nature of this metre must, under any circumstances, be very decided; equality of membership should not then be too often accompanied with equality of ordering. Thus, with central cesura, the lines should perhaps not too often resemble these :—

Swept they | as swift|ly they tra|versed || with spee|dy foot|steps the  
plain.

With les|ening space | on each o|ther, || the hos|tile ar|mies advance.

It will by no means do to proscribe such approximations altogether, but as they are forms more prone to occur than any other, it behoves to be somewhat on guard against them.

The cesuras also require particular attention.

As a measure of six feet, crown verse has a strong tendency to central division, and this withstood resolves into a leaning hardly less decided for a triple membership. For the chief cesura, falling one beat aside, is both itself somewhat weakened and tends to have a slighter cesura compensatory as a sort of counterpoise, early or late. This, of course, may be easily avoided, where advisable, by drawing close the grammatical structure at one or other point.

Another way to produce variation is to introduce the tripping foot freely wherever deemed advisable; in the second foot following up, as it were, the strong beginning :—

Loudly *one on* another they call to come and lay hold—

Calmly *here at* a distance sit looking on at their ease—

Darting *down like* a meteor which bright in its radiant splendour

Marked by *soothsayers* sends when armies gather to battle.

Or, again, wherever the cesura gives the power of reversion :—

The ruin to ward, *madly* wilt thou this matter regret—

But who is like thee *able* with steadfast mind to endure—

Ho there, thou warrior bold ! *son of* redoubtable Tydeus—

This form, if applied at cesura on the fourth foot, will enable even the sixth foot to be slow with tolerable ease:—

The many nations of warriors pour; earth as they tread—  
To take their station seated around, while in the midst—  
Refuse to pay us the forfeit agreed on, breaking the compact—  
Give ye ear likewise to me in reply, great the concern—

Here, if measured from the end, the sixth foot may still be held of three syllables, and there is no doubt that this mode of looking at it has its propriety.

Variation of this kind seems best employed sparingly, but warrant for the use may be found in the fact that an additional syllable, in the position from which one has been omitted, would add only to the speed of the verse, not to its force, in itself undesirable, of which take these conclusive instances:—

Thus dread(ly) glaring he threatened, but seizing a rock in his hand.  
Objects to her of anxious regard both chief(tain)s alike.

As elsewhere said, an English foot is not any independent entity that can be dealt with at will; one quick foot is by no means the equivalent of another; nor can they be used with indifference. To be available in any degree in the opening place, a quick foot must be of the slightest possible construction, above all in the middle syllable of the three:—

*The design of Zeus in fulfilment upon them, even as first.*

In the closing foot, there is no amount of syllabic weight that cannot easily be got over, in the extreme producing spondaic effect.

*Slobbering it out over me so in thy wayward young days.*

But precisely as it is allowable thus to deal, do the three syllables fail in themselves to constitute a foot in the ordinary sense, for the syllable 'ward' is so far enclitic to the rest of the word to which it belongs that its affinities are quite cut off from what follows. Hence the difference of character a



quick foot must have for the first place; hence why a slow foot should so much more readily fill the position. It is thus seen how deeply the principle of the enclitic odd-over remissible enters into the core of English verse, and how a certain regard for the prosodial weight of the syllables used, particularly the centre one of quick feet, is imperative to be observed throughout, with due estimation of their position, both in the order and in the line.

Tolerable equality of membership, whether into two or three, occurring line after line, between verses standing apart in individual sense, that is not overlined at all, produces an elegiacal note:—

Beholding had on him pity the noble son of Menœtius,  
 And thus in heartfelt accents grieving for him he cried,—  
 Ah! hapless leaders and wealsmen ye of the nations of Greece,  
 Are ye thus doomed to destruction far from all ye hold dear,  
 To glut with your flesh the dogs of the Trojans, no more reaching home?  
 But tell me, Eurypylus, prithee, hero of valour and might,  
 Can the Achæans longer bear up against terrible Hector?  
 Or is the dread doom upon them even now by his spear?  
 Then unto him speaking back made answer wounded Evæmon,—  
 No longer, noble Patroclus, is any hope for the Greeks;  
 Back from the field driven worsted, their ships receive them in flight;  
 Not one of all their bravest but smitten by arrow or spear,  
 And onward and ever onward wilder surgeth the foe.—*Iliad*, xi. 813.

Whether treatment of this kind be allowable at all in the epic, is matter of opinion, for evidently it sins against the Virgilian code of artistic spaces—no line to be exactly divided into two or three—no two successive lines with exactly the same cesuras, &c. The *Æneid* through, however, the one note struck at the beginning never changes; with the *Iliad*, far otherwise.

One thing most apparent, whichever way we turn, is the vast advantage yielded by the remissible odd-over, were it only for the double choice of break it allows at the middle of the line, rendering preventible equal division at will with the utmost ease and harmony. It is not too much to say that the existence of the verse is bound up with this allow-

ance. On it depends alike the elimination of any rhyming tendency, the result of an undue emphasis thrown on the last syllable, causing it to dwell in the mind, and of the annoying jerk brought about by a fixed ending of the other variety, as in the English hexameter to be noticed shortly.

Rhythmic cesura, as observed, is always as near the centre of the line as grammatical structure will allow. It will suffer displacement for the sense, to the extent of the cesural limit, four feet one way or the other, but no farther. All pauses, then, beyond this range are sentential pauses, secondary cesuras simply; the verse will have to provide more satisfactorily elsewhere besides, in a more central position:—

- Then haste and shoot the bold Greek || in his hour of triumph, and  
vow—
- Bientôt, and then a companion of his || full speedy upon him.

Even within limits, especially if the succession of syllables be favourable, the cesura will disregard a slight stop, to become more central:—

- To birds and dogs, till in full || the will of Zeus was accomplished.
- Erst by the great son of Cronus || himself held, work of Hephæstus
- Solace of joy, above all || unto the wounded Sarpedon.

Whether or not sentential pauses, towards the extremes of the line, are rendered less necessary by their supernumerary character cesurally, may be a moot question; but certain it is, the structure of the line renders their placement somewhat difficult. The requisite for the overlining of a foot single is an order of four in the preceding line, followed by an apparent one of three, seven feet in all, of which the last foot is of necessity forced into the next verse:—

- But when the great voice breastforth be sent, and words as the snow-  
flakes  
In winter,—

A divisional arrangement of two, two, and three feet will not do, for then the foot carried over into the next verse

appears to trail, as if it ought to have been got into the preceding line, but could not:—

— E'er wrought such wonders as he through Zeus this day past hath done  
On the Grecians—

There must be no approach to hover; each syllable that receives the accent must be fully capable of receiving it, or a very lame effect will be produced:—

Sing, muse, the wrath of Achilles, *which* entailed on the Greeks

Supply a capable word to take the accent, as 'which bitter entailed,' and all will go well.

Prepositions may however be occasionally raised to accental dignity, that class of words bearing the elevation better than others, but it is a practice to be avoided:—

Stretching his hands for assistance *to* his kind comrades around—

—unto the ears

*Of* the great son of Laertes coming sudden the sound.

Conversely, the fewer instances that an accent is *slurred* the better. It is bad enough with a capable monosyllable so treated, but no word of two syllables should be, wherever it can be possibly helped:—

— And setting on head his *brass* helmet, his thick hand clutching a spear—

— Round on his shoulders a rich *mantle* threw, the blood-spotted hide—

— From smiting the Greeks, when night's *friendly* shadows wrapped them about—

It is inconceivable how deadweighted the verse will become with a little of this, yet it is a use besetting the operator at every step.

Owing to the great rhythmic force of this measure, it requires a particular management apart from anything yet referred to, which may be called *presentation*, bearing reference to the number of lines anything is said in, to the so placing of the words that the sense strikes clearest, to the

introduction of the ballad refrain in a fitting manner, and so on—perhaps *locution* would best express it. Hardly any rules can be given for guidance in this matter, for altogether it is one of judgment; but an example or two may show what is meant. The following version of a passage already given is inferior to it on this account:—

From the bed of princely Tithonus was rising the goddess of morn,  
Bringing back light to gods and to men, when Zeus sent fell Strife  
To the swift Grecian galleys, bearing aloft the beacon of war.  
In the midst, on the deep-hulled ship of Ulysses, the goddess took stand,  
Whence to shout alike to the tents of Telamonian Ajax  
And those of Achilles, they who a-trust in the strength of their manhood  
And power of hand updrew their trim ships the outmost of all, &c.

Another unsatisfactory passage:—

Hitherward thitherward tossed were the minds of all the Achæans,  
Like to when winds contending together, the North and the West,  
Stormy rush down on the fish-bearing sea from cold northern Thrace,  
That on high are cast the huge black billows one on another  
Lashed into foam, and heaped the seaweed far up on the shore.

Better thus:—

As tossed and unsettled their minds as the waves of the fishy Ægean,  
When from the chilling uplands of Thrace tempestuous winds,  
The North and the West, have wrestled upon it, and still with the swell  
Runs billow on billow, casting seaweed in heaps on the shore.

Of course points of this kind are more or less of regard in all metres, and concern not so much versification as poetry proper, but it is simply meant to state that in this measure more than in any other existent will the practiser have trouble on this account. Altogether, for more reasons than one, this metre is no easy handling, and far from grateful in results.

The elegiacal tone imparted by line movement, and tolerably equal membership in a certain foregoing piece, is not to be overlooked, for it touches on the true metre of Elegy English. The only further requisite is a slower movement to impart a more subdued tone, less of the rise with more of the fall cadence:—



When on my mind there falleth gloomy the shade of that night,  
The last ere an exile driven from all I cherished away,  
When of that night recurrence memory sadly renews,  
Adown my cheek there stealeth still assuageless the tear.  
To dawn the day was drawing by which the sovereign will  
From Italy's outmost confines on penalty bade me depart,  
Nor heart nor time then left me.—*Ovid*.

The keynote of crown verse would seem to be the constant tendency to the rise, any departure from which is at once perceptible. Not to admit the usual rise is in itself a species of fall, as great in effect as a real fall that has not the general tone to contrast with—in verse, as in music, it being not so much the absolute note struck as the relative that makes the impression.

To conclude, the effect of very fast numbers is seldom so pleasing as that of more moderate. It is a great mistake to suppose that there is any connection between a rattling pace and liveliness or vigour.

It remains now to see how far a rival line can be constituted, having a short foot in the sixth place, already instanced in a few separate verses :—

With a sound as of rippling waters rose from her stellar throne  
The joyous queen of the verdant isle, and a strain divine  
Swelled from her blooming lips so fair, and skywards up  
Floated in heavenly harmony, that in the breasts of all  
Who heard the wondrous sound of her song, a holy peace  
Fell as a moonlight calm entrancing, and all was hush.

The length at which crown measure has been treated renders it unnecessary to go into this in similar detail. Suffice it to say that it is seen to be quite practicable, that overlining can be carried on almost with as much ease as in blank verse, but that for an heroic measure the other must carry the day, unless a partnership be set up in any intermediate degree, as taste and circumstances determine.

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## VII.

## FALSE METRE AND DUBIOUS.

AN assumption that has been proceeded on throughout is that the true metre of any verse is that which the run of words sets to. If the professed metre be at variance with the run evident, the former is to be declared in the wrong; and if still the verse be characterised as of that metre, it must be with the qualification of false.

Tripping metre, as elsewhere stated, does not admit the hover, least of all in the first foot, that by which the run is so greatly determined. In the following, a piece apparently meant for trip, is in a fair way of lapsing into the forward, the third syllable being far stronger than the first:—

Of Prometheus, how undaunted  
 On Olympus' shining bastions  
 His audacious foot he planted,  
 Myths are told and songs are chaunted,  
 Full of promptings and suggestions.—LONGFELLOW.

This is by no means a solitary instance of the kind; the following is for the most part in the same predicament:—

## THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN.

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,  
 Ere the sorrow comes with years?  
 They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,  
 And that cannot stop their tears.  
 The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,  
 The young birds are chirping in the nest,  
 The young fawns are playing with the shadows,  
 The young flowers are blooming toward the west—  
 But the young, young children, O my brothers,  
 They are weeping bitterly!  
 They are weeping in the playtime of the others,  
 In the country of the free.—MRS. BROWNING.

Under this head must also come all attempted dactylic

verse which cannot be classed as revert (see ch. xv.), including the so-called English hexameter, which thus identifies itself in great measure with the verse last treated under the name of crown, being, as before said, the same with restrictions:—

This is | the fo|rest prime|val. The mur|muring pines | and the hem|locks,  
Bearded | with moss, | and with gar|ments green, | indistinct | in the  
twi|light,

Stand like Druids of old, with voices sad and prophetic;  
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their bosoms.  
Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep-voiced neighbouring ocean  
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of the forest.

This is the forest primeval; but where are the hearts that beneath it  
Leaped like the roe, when he hears in the woodland the voice of the  
hunter?

Where is the thatch-roofed village, the home of Acadian farmers,—  
Men whose lives glided on like rivers that watered the woodlands,  
Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an image of heaven?

LONGFELLOW.

The true scanning of this measure is as marked in the sample, that which it naturally sets to in spite of anyone. The odd-over constant which every verse is seen to possess is the cause of the peculiar jerk which an impartial reader finds so dislocating to his sense of euphony and melody, and which even the illustrious author of the above copy compares to a prisoner dancing to the music of his own chains.

The professed composition is that the fifth foot is a dactyl, the sixth a trochee, the other four feet either at will, making the scanning thus, with the accent at the beginning of the foot throughout:—

This is the | fórest pri | méval. The | múrmuring | pínes and the | hémlocks

It may not be amiss to state the fathership of this metre.

There are those who, resigning themselves to the futility of attempting to write in quantity, yet cling to classical metres by the fiction elsewhere set forth, the use of the same nominal feet. They reason thus of the hexameter:—Homer and Virgil have used this metre with vast effect, and we of

this country, though pronouncing their languages after our own fashion, as were they so much English, are yet able to get from them a full and flowing melody of undeniable worth :—

Arma virumque cano, Trojæ qui primus ab oris  
 Italiam, fato profugus, Lavinia venit  
 Littora; mult(um) ill(e) et terris jactatus et alto,  
 Vi superum, saevae memorem Junonis ob iram.  
 Multa quoqu(e) et bello passus, dum conderet urbem,  
 Inferretque Deos Latio : genus unde Latinum,  
 Albanique patres, atqu(e) altae moenia Romae.

If so good an effect, they argue, can be got from Latin treated as English, why not obtain the same effect in English itself, by arranging it in like manner? The result may be seen in the example before given.

The reasons of the difference ought not to be far to seek. The prime cause, as may well be supposed, is in the unaccordant natures of the two languages. The simple state of the case is, that Latin, with its sonorous syllables, will bear what English with its vowels three-quarters mutes will not.

In English, every syllable of a word that receives the accent is relatively more important than the others. The word centres in that syllable, and the rest is but enclitic to it. But though we professedly treat Latin as English, the accent we throw on the words of that language is by no means the equivalent in that respect of what we throw on our own; we indeed single out one syllable, but we by no means degrade the others.

Substitute a single English word in place of the closing one in each Latin line, and the whole melody of the verse will be destroyed :—

Arma virumque cano Trojae qui primus ab *army*  
 Italiam, fato profugus, Lavinia *forest*  
 Littora; mult' ill' et terris jactatus *exhausted*  
 Vi superum, saevae memorem Junonis ob *absent*.

Need more be said to make clear that to rule the two lan-

guages on one pattern, must needs lodge the perpetrator in a quagmire?

But in supposing the English put through the same discipline as the Latin, a further error is committed. The accent in the latter language has been made to undergo a displacement not to be thought of in English. Where, in dealing with separate words, we should before have said *cáno*, we now say *canó*. *Trójae* has become *Trojáe*; *fáto*, *fató*; *profúgus*, *profugús*; *pássus*, *passús*, and so on.

Latin being a dead language, we treat it as we please, but in English nothing is more vital than the accent; the language will bear violence in any particular rather than in that. Fancy reading:—

This is the *forést primevál*. The murmuring pines and the hemlock, but such would be only analogous. It is rather that hence in the ancient model the real hexameter cadence is procured, than from anything answering to run either backward or forward in English, which in Greek and Latin seems mainly indeterminate.

The English hexameter, from its very structure, tends to the rise almost throughout, even more than crown verse; with mid-cesura, unless, indeed, remaining slow, it unavoidably does, the last member being set so by rule, the first not having scope to be other, a quick foot in the second place being debarred, even more completely than a slow one in the sixth. In the second member there is indeed a rare occasional fall, known as the spondaic ending:—

Into this wonderful land, at the base of the Ozark Mountains,  
Whirled them aloft through the air, at once from a hundred housetops.

But the term spondaic is no longer truly applicable here, for the weight of the syllables is little regarded in the arrangement, and even if it were, would not tell to any purpose.

Actual fall, even in an opening four-foot member, where it can come about, is somewhat rare:—

Happy was he who might touch her hand and the hem of her garment.  
She, too, would bring to her husband's house delight and abundance.



Four dissyllabic feet in one member is more frequent ; but the whole, it is seen, is but crown again under restriction.

Such an exceptional line as

Stand like | harpers | hoar, || with beards | that rest | on their bo|soms,  
must be held to scan thus, ' hoar ' forming a foot to itself ; for the attraction of the other verses will cause the run to revert to the forward at the cesura. (See further on this subject, chaps. xvi. and xvii.)

Be it remarked, from their very rigidity, a certain advantage accrues to the practiser of hexameters ; for his range of expression being limited by law, he cannot be held responsible for not going beyond it, whence the troublesome branch of the subject dubbed ' presentation ' will hardly be a concern to him, for the jerking of the metre so determines the one unalterable expression, that how a thing is said in it, or in what words, appears of little or no account, and not to be metrically reflected at all.

Some may deem that crown verse as set forth has been allowed too great license ; some, on the other hand, may incline to quite the contrary opinion ; but all in practice can please themselves. Any system must be finally judged by its products, over which there is no controlling canon, nor can there be any above that of pleasing proportion regulated by good taste.

There may still be those who will adhere to this restricted form of the metre, for false or not in dactylic regard, it exists for what it is worth ; but if such there should be, let them be particularly careful, whenever the first foot is meant to be a trochee, that the opening syllable of every line be strongly accentual, otherwise the verse, having a tendency to lapse into the forward from the very beginning, will appear of five feet, not six :—

As apart by the window she stood, with her hand in her lover's,—  
And the notary rising, and blessing the bride and the bridegroom.

Of the elegiac as received on this plan, take the following,



a translation from Schiller's 'Walk,' by Sir J. Herschel. It is far more readable than the simple hexameter form, on account of the variation in ending brought about by the so-called pentameters always written alternately with the other.

A pentameter, it should be said, is by rule of this build: central cesura, first member of two feet dactyl or spondee at will, with a long odd syllable over, ditto the last member, save that the feet are of dactyls always. Now for the example:—

Sacred walls! from whose bosom the seeds of humanity, wafted

E'en to the farthest isles, morals and arts have conveyed.

Sages in these thronged gates in justice and judgment have spoken:

Heroes to battle have rushed hence for their altars and homes:

Mothers the while (their infants in arms), from the battlements gazing,

Follow with tears the host till in the distance it fades:

Then to the temples crowding and prostrate flung at the altars

Pray for their triumph and fame—pray for their joyful return.

Triumph and fame are theirs, but in vain their welcome expects them.

Read how th' exciting stone tells of their glorious deserts:

Traveller, when to Sparta thou comest, declare thou hast seen us

Each man slain at his post, e'en as the law hath ordained.

Soft be your honoured rest! with your precious life-blood besprinkled

Freshens the olive-bough—sparkles with harvest the plain.

And now to go on to other matters.

The most frequent error English writers of quick verse fall into, is that of overweighting the three-syllabled foot. The syllable of the three that it most behoves not to overburden is the middle one. As long as this position is occupied by part of a word with the accent elsewhere, there is little to apprehend; but when it comes to monosyllables, too much care cannot be taken. The more hedges and ditches that can be got over without a spill, the more seemingly of some literary steeplechasers the enjoyment. To these let there be left their sport, but also let those who wish to drive smoothly be informed of obstacles that lie in their path.

The worst stumblingblock in all English is the word 'our,' and the next, perhaps, the poetical 'flower.' The second of

these is acknowledged to be of two syllables; the first, owing to our absurd mode of spelling, only one, though nowise different virtually from the other. Flower, indeed, is more often than not in verse jotted down flow'r, with a mark of elision, and treated as a monosyllable; but in the muteness so common among English short vowels unaccented, this is not sufficient, the vowel still remains as much as ever; the mute required to pronounce the 'r' in 'our' is no otherwise circumstanced. Never must either or any other resembling word be treated as of less than two syllables, under any circumstances whatever.

Herein lies the awkwardness of 'our' above all other words. Too insignificant to receive the accent, it yet always demands the consideration of a dissyllable, which is rendered the more annoying by its frequent recurrence.

Mark the overloaded effect from treating these words as of one syllable only, and then cramming them into quick feet:—

Reflecting our eyes as they sparkle and weep—  
To the delicate growth of our isle—  
Their time with the flow'rs on the margin have wasted.

'Even,' 'heaven,' and participles of this ending, are words most hap to be abused in the same way:—

Nor ev'n in the hour when his heart is most gay—  
One bright drop or two that has fall'n on the leaves.

It is hardly too much to say, that nearly every piece of quick verse in English is more or less marred by this wilful procedure.

The chapter on false metre may not be an unsuitable place to introduce that of false emphasis, though there is no connection between the two subjects.

When a word is italicised, surely one would say that it is to indicate a more emphatic accent is to be thrown on that word; if not, why signalise it? But a syllable, strangely enough, is often italicised between accents, which it appears to be the writer's desire to fetch up like a dropped stitch. The ab-

surdity of such an arrangement needs no pointing out, for the impossibility of emphasising a syllable in a position whence the accent is designedly excluded speaks for itself:—

The budding sprouts of those that you *shall* wear

Italics ought to be excluded from verse altogether; where there is anything emphatic for the accent to mark, the accent itself is the best thing to mark it with:—

Ye would be dupes and victims, and ye *áre*.

The grave accent appears the proper one to denote when a syllable commonly passed over receives separate pronunciation, as amazèd; the acute when the beat itself receives any displacement, as harmoniè.

Italics in verse are a pretty sure indication of something faulty, showing a latent idea in the writer's mind, that such and such a passage is not as expressive or emphatic as it was meant to be.

## VIII.

### QUICK VERSE RHYMED.

As remarked in the previous sections, the character of quick verse depends not only on the relative numbers of the two feet in combination, but as much or more on their relative position. The whole number of varieties may be grouped into two classes—that which has the metrical rise sustained on till the end of the verse, and that which has it succeeded by feet of slower progression.

First, the class in which the rise is sustained. Here it may be noticed more perhaps than anywhere how essentially the nature of English feet is one of *pace*; neither a matter of force nor of weight, nor of anything so much as slowness or quickness in exact proportion to the mixture of the feet of

those qualities in the verse. It is by and through pace that every effect in English verse comes about that depends on the foot arrangement for its cause. What other effects and tones there are arise from other sources—latent melody, latent prosody, rhythmic cadencing, &c.

The selections will be chosen to illustrate as appropriately as may be the different degrees of speed, but it would be to multiply examples needlessly to cite apart every variation in this respect.

*Two-foot quatrain :—*

'Tis the last rose of summer  
 Left blooming alone ;  
 All her lovely companions  
 Are faded and gone ;  
 No flow'r of her kindred,  
 No rosebud is nigh,  
 To reflect back her blushes,  
 Or give sigh for sigh !—T. MOORE.

*Three-foot or six, as written :—*

The valley lay smiling before me,  
 When lately I left her behind ;  
 Yet I trembled, and something hung o'er me  
 That saddened the joy of my mind.  
 I looked for the lamp which she told me  
 Should shine when her pilgrim returned ;  
 But though darkness began to infold me,  
 No lamp from the battlements burned.—T. MOORE.

*Four-foot and three alternate, or seven as written :—*

The rose had been washed, just washed in a shower,  
 Which Mary to Anna conveyed ;  
 The plentiful moisture encumbered the flower,  
 And weighed down its beautiful head.  
 The cup was all filled, and the leaves were all wet,  
 And it seemed to a fanciful view,  
 To weep for the buds it had left with regret  
 On the flourishing bush where it grew.—COWPER.



*Four-foot :—*

I knew by the smoke that so gracefully curled  
 Above the green elms that a cottage was near;  
 And I said, 'If there's peace to be found in the world,  
 A heart that is humble may hope for it here.'  
 Every leaf was at rest, and I heard not a sound  
 But the woodpecker tapping the hollow beech-tree.  
 'And here in this lone little wood,' I exclaimed,  
 'With a maid that was lovely to soul and to eye,  
 Who would blush if I praised her, and weep if I blamed,  
 How blest could I live and how calm could I die!'  
 Every leaf, &c.

*Five-foot :—*

At the mid-hour of night, when stars are weeping, I fly  
 To the lone vale we loved when life shone warm in thine eye;  
 And I think that if spirits can steal from the regions of air,  
 To revisit past scenes of delight, thou wilt come to me there,  
 And tell me our love is remembered e'en in the sky.  
 Then I sing the wild song, which once 'twas rapture to hear,  
 When our voices both mingling breathed like one on the ear;  
 And as echo far off through the vale my sad orison rolls,  
 I think, oh my love! 'tis thy voice from the kingdom of souls,  
 Faintly answering still the notes that once were so dear!

T. MOORE.

Verses wholly of quick feet, of which rhyme is not without examples, though they may be ranged most agreeably as a separate class, are in nature, but of the last instanced, raised to the utmost of speed. It might not be amiss to call them *double quick* :—

He is gone on the mountain,  
 He is lost to the forest,  
 Like a summer-dried fountain,  
 When our need was the sorest.  
 The fount reappearing  
 From the raindrops shall borrow,  
 But to us comes no cheering,  
 To Duncan no morrow.—W. SCOTT.

Note the odd-over in every line, not allowed for in the opening of the next.



*Four foot :—*

Rise, O Muse, in the wrath of thy rapture divine,  
 And sweep with a finger of awe every line,  
 Till it tremble and burn as thine own glances burn,  
 Through the vision thou kindest ! wherein I discern  
 All the unconscious cruelty hid in the heart  
 Of mankind ; all the limitless grief we impart  
 Unawares to each other ; the limitless wrong  
 We inflict without heed, as we hurry along  
 In this boisterous pastime of life. So we toy  
 With the infinite ! So in our sport we destroy, &c.

R. LYTTON.

*Six-foot ditto :—*

And his heart said within him, Alas !

For man dies ! if his glory abideth, himself from his glory shall pass.

And that which remaineth behind he seeth it not any more.

For how shall he know what comes after, who knoweth not what went  
 before ?

I have planted me gardens and vineyards, and gotten me silver and gold,  
 And my hand from whatever my heart hath desired I did not withhold :  
 And what profit have I in the works of my hands which I take not away ?  
 I have searched out wisdom and knowledge ; and what do they profit  
 me, they ?

As the fool dieth, so doth the wise. What is gathered is scattered again,  
 As the breath of the beasts even so is the breath of the children of men :  
 And the same thing befalleth them both. And not any man's soul is his  
 own.—R. LYTTON.

The following are examples of the checked or falling  
 rhythm :—

*Three-foot :—*

I arise from dream of thee  
 In the first sweet sleep of night,  
 When the winds are breathing low,  
 And the stars are shining bright :  
 I arise from dream of thee,  
 And a spirit in my feet  
 Has led me—who knows how ?  
 To thy chamber window sweet.—SHELLEY.

Here the quick foot is constantly the first and no other,  
 whence a considerable difference in run between this ex-  
 ample and the next, where the sole quick place is the second.

Has sorrow thy young days shaded,  
 As clouds o'er the morning fleet ?  
 Too fast have those young days faded,  
 That even in sorrow were sweet ?  
 Does Time with his cold wing wither  
 Each feeling that once was dear ?—  
 Come, child of misfortune ! come hither,  
 I'll weep with thee tear for tear.—MOORE.

*Four-foot :—*

The mistletoe hung in the castle hall,  
 And the holly branch shone on the old oak wall ;  
 The baron's retainers were blithe and gay,  
 Keeping their Christmas holiday.  
 The baron beheld, with a father's pride,  
 His beautiful child young Lovel's bride.  
 She with her bright eyes seemed to be  
 The star of that goodly company.  
 I am weary of dancing now, she cried,  
 Yet tarry awhile, I'll hide, I'll hide ;  
 And, Lovel, be sure you are first to trace  
 The clue to my secret hiding-place.  
 Away she ran, and her friends began  
 Each bower to search, and each nook to scan—

Here the quick foot, in contrast to the two preceding examples, has free range of the first three feet.

*Five-foot :—*

Through grief and through danger thy smile hath cheered my way,  
 Till hope seemed to bud from each thorn that round me lay.  
 The darker our fortune, the brighter our pure love burned ;  
 Till shame into glory, till fear into zeal was turned ;  
 Yes, slave as I was, in thy arms my spirit felt free,  
 And blessed even the sorrows that made me more dear to thee.  
 Thy rival was honoured, whilst thou wert wronged and scorned,  
 Thy crown was of briars, while gold her brows adorned,  
 She wooed me to temples, whilst thou lay hid in caves,  
 Her friends were all masters, while thine, alas ! were slaves,  
 Yet cold in the earth at thy feet I would rather be,  
 Than wed what I love not, or turn one thought from thee.

T. MOORE.

It is not at all pretended that any strict line of division is constantly observed between these classes in practice; indeed, one stanza often differs greatly from another in the same poem. Though the individual lines must necessarily incline one way or the other, when freely intermixed, as in most of the following examples, they may be held to create an independent variety, the changeable.

*Two-foot:—*

By the fair and brave  
 Who blushing unite,  
 Like the sun and wave  
 When they meet at night!  
 By the tear that shows  
 When passion is nigh,  
 As the raindrop flows  
 From the heat of the sky!—T. MOORE.

*Four-foot and three:—*

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,  
 As his corse to the rampart we hurried;  
 Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot  
 O'er the grave where our hero we buried.  
 We buried him darkly at dead of night,  
 The sods with our bayonets turning,  
 By the struggling moonbeams' misty light,  
 And the lantern dimly burning.—WOLFE.

*Four-foot:—*

Svend Vonved bound his sword to his side,  
 He fain will battle with knights of pride;  
 So fierce and strange was his whole array,  
 No mortal ventured to cross his way.  
 His helm was blinking against the sun,  
 His spurs were clinking his heels upon,  
 His horse was springing, with bridle ringing,  
 While sat the warrior wildly singing.  
 He rode a day, he rode for three,  
 No town or city he yet could see;  
 'Ha,' said the youth, 'by my father's hand,  
 There is no city in all this land.'—G. BORROW.

*Five-foot:—*

Dread you their haunting, oh man of the world-wise brow ?  
 These ghosts, would you banish them all away from our earth ?  
 Alas ! when I was haunted, the loveless dearth  
 Never came over my soul that is over it now.  
 Oh for the beautiful spirits that haunted me  
 In the long sweet hours of the pallid winter nights,  
 With the noiseless garb and the tremulous angel-lights,  
 Lighting my soul, as the sunlight the desolate sea !

EMILY HICKEY.

*Six-foot:—*

Is it ever hot in the square ? There's a fountain to sport and splash !  
 In the shade it sings and springs ; in the shine such foam-bows flash  
 On the horses with curling fishtails, that prance and paddle and pash  
 Round the lady atop in the conch—fifty gazers cannot abash,  
 Though all that she wears is some weeds round her waist in a sort of  
 sash.

All the year long at the villa, there's nothing to see though you linger,  
 Except yon cypress that points like Death's lean lifted forefinger.

R. BROWNING.

## Another variety the same length :—

Here alone with my dead ; the sight of a human face (*trip two deep*)  
 Makes the pain sharper, I think ; so none but the Saviour of Grace  
 Shall see me, as here I sit with the white-clad motionless form  
 Of my little son who is dead lying upon my arm. (*trip at cesura*)  
 I have laid him down in the cot that each night used I rock, and spread  
 All the tender flowers I could gather about his head ; (*trip three deep*)  
 Early spring-time it is, so I could only find  
 Delicate violet-bloom, that shrank from the bitter wind.

EMILY HICKEY.

There is little to be observed of these forms individually or collectively ; the applications that they serve are exemplified in the given extracts, songs, ballads, and minor poems in general. Rather as the poet's particular production commends itself to our liking we feel well or ill disposed to the measures employed.



## IX.

## THE UNRHYMED STAVE.

STAVE or stanza is the general designation for any number of lines connected together on any plan, regular or irregular; stave, as far as any distinction exists, applying more perhaps to the minor forms, stanza to the longer and more elaborate.

As opposed to the continuous or leading forms of a metre, the stave exhibits the powers of the same in some settled arrangement, or combination of pattern repeated over and over again.

As on other occasions, our subject must be divided, to begin, into two great branches—the unrhymed and the rhymed—totally dissimilar.

A variation on blank verse, even so slightly different as the next, is not without its metric effect, the mere divisioning followed inclining to a verse-by-verse arrangement; each complete usually in its own sense, brings about a closer unity of the line, which acting as a more definite integer in composition, tends apparently in some degree to quicken the movement—a needful requirement.

The first three lines of the next example are, it will be seen, odd-over regularly, the last strict measure; a greater degree of fixity in this point as well as in others usually attending concretion into the stave, especially where brief:—

‘Son,’ thus his father widowed long and aged,  
Mournfully said, ‘The young are never lonely;  
Solitude’s self to them is a boon comrade;  
Lone are the aged; lone amid the crowd.

Loneliest when brooding o’er a silent hearthstone  
Vacant of prattlers, coaxing back to laughter:  
Toys to the greybeard are his children’s children;  
They are to age, my son, as hopes to youth.’

BULWER LYTTON.

In the same volume whence this was taken, ‘The Lost Tales of Miletus,’ there is another poem ‘The Wife of Miletus,’

in a measure the fellow of this, save that the endings are strict measure and odd-over alternately.

In the next instanced we have a four-lined stave with the third line shortened to three feet, only the concluding verse with the extra syllable:—

Omartes, king of the wide plains which, north  
Of Tanais, pasture steeds for Scythian Mars,

Forsook the simple ways  
And nomad tents of his unconquered fathers ;

And in the fashion of the neighbouring Medes,  
Built a great city girt with moat and wall,

And in the midst thereof  
A royal palace dwarfing piles in Susa.—BULWER LYTTON.

Another poem by the same, entitled ‘chalcas,’ otherwise like this, has the first three lines odd-over, the last only strict measure.

Another form, the last line shortened :—

Thou spirit of the spangled night !  
I woo thee from the watch-tower high,  
Where thou dost sit to guide the bark  
Of lonely mariner.

The winds are whistling o’er the wolds,  
The distant main is moaning low :  
Come, let us sit and weave a song—  
A melancholy song.—KIRKE WHITE.

A piece entitled ‘Death and Sisyphus’ has this identical structure in the tales above quoted.

It is worthy of remark in passing, that all the variations on a stave of four-lined march metre within the bounds observed, though all consistently diverging from blank verse in tone, yet have the strongest resemblance one to another.

Lord Lytton has been the first to apply metres of this class to narrative, the result in all cases being highly successful. The single case in which he has applied tripping metre cannot, however, receive the same meed of approbation ; the arrangement is such that a call for rhyme arises:—

Many wonders on the ocean  
 By the moonlight may be seen.  
 Under moonlight on the Euxine  
 Rose the blessed silver isle.

As Leonymus of Croton,  
 At the Pythian god's behest,  
 Steered along the troubled waters  
 To the tranquil Spirit-land.

Rhyme may be as easily dispensed with in tripping as in march metre, if only care be taken that an accented syllable rarely conclude the line, above all not the closing one, if a similar proceeding has taken place one or two verses before it; otherwise, as in the above, the demand for concurrence of sound at those points will be too great to be disregarded.

This precept, where no lack of rhyme is felt, is exemplified in the next, a piece having nigh the same arrangement in tripping metre as that beginning 'Omarthes,' and equally satisfactory:—

Leafless are the trees; their purple branches  
 Spread themselves abroad, like reefs of coral,  
 Rising silent  
 In the Red Sea of the winter sunset.

From the hundred chimneys of the village,  
 Like the Afreet in the Arabian story,  
 Smoky columns  
 Tower aloft into the air of amber.—LONGFELLOW.

The next differs from that we have had before in having the strong beginning and odd syllable over both constant, with a frequent hover on the fourth foot:—

Swift through the sky the vessel of the Suras  
 Sails up the field of ether like an angel.  
 Rich is the freight, O vessel, that thou bearest!  
 Beauty and virtue,

Fatherly cares and filial veneration,  
 Hearts which are proved and strengthened by affliction,  
 Manly resentment, fortitude, and action,  
 Womanly goodness.—SOUTHEY.

Again we have another form, consisting, with burden included, of an unrhymed triplet:—

I have had playmates, I have had companions  
In my days of childhood, in my joyful schooldays;  
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,  
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies;  
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.—C. LAMB.

A commoner arrangement has two lines of five feet alternated with two of three:—

Then let me roam some wild and heathy scene,  
Or find some ruin midst its dreary dells,  
Whose walls more awful nod  
By thy religious gleams.

Or if chill blustering winds and driving rain  
Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut,  
That from the mountain side  
Views wild, and swelling floods.—COLLINS.

Longfellow has the following:—

Welcome, my old friend,  
Welcome to a foreign fireside,  
While the sullen gales of autumn  
Shake the windows.

The ungrateful world  
Has, it seems, dealt harshly with thee,  
Since beneath the skies of Denmark,  
First I met thee.

An alternation of four-foot strict measure and three-foot odd-over has been employed in a continuous form in the old English poem, 'The Ormulum,' modernised by Mr. Marsh in his 'Manual of the English Language.' No praise can be accorded to this style:—

Now, brother Walter, brother mine  
After the flesh's nature;  
And brother mine in Christianity,  
By baptism and believing;



And brother in the house of God,  
 Eke in another manner,  
 In that we both have taken up  
 One priestly rule to follow.

A kind of irregular stanza has been employed by Shelley in his 'Queen Mab;' march metre in lines for the most part of four and three feet at will :—

If solitude hath ever led thy steps  
 To the wild ocean's echoing shore,  
 And thou hast lingered there  
 Until the sun's broad orb  
 Seemed resting on the burnished wave,  
 Thou must have marked the lines  
 Of purple gold that motionless  
 Hung o'er the sinking sphere :  
 Thou must have marked the billowy clouds,  
 Edged with intolerable radiancy,  
 Towering like rocks of jet  
 Crowned with a diamond wreath.  
 And yet there is a moment,  
 When the sun's highest point  
 Peeps like a star o'er ocean's western edge,  
 When those far clouds of feathery gold,  
 Shaded with deepest purple, gleam  
 Like islands on a dark blue sea;  
 Then has thy fancy soared above the earth,  
 And furled its wearied wing  
 Within the Fairy's shrine.

Again a more irregular variety of the same from Southey's  
 'Thalaba':—

Alas, the setting sun  
 Saw Zeinab in her bliss,  
 Hodeirah's wife beloved,  
 The fruitful mother late,  
 Whom when the daughters of Arabia named  
 They wished their lot like hers.  
 She wanders o'er the desert sands  
 A wretched widow now ;  
 The fruitful mother of so fair a race  
 With only one preserved,  
 She wanders o'er the wilderness.

There is not much to be said either for or against this style, only it may be observed as a general rule that when lines differ in length irregularly, and have neither rhyme nor settled cadence to mark their changes, nor some recurrent form or sentiment at intervals, the mind is put on the stretch to discover such, which, not being found, results in its rather being perplexed than pleased, as from a sense of disproportion.

In the following we have quite another effect, which seems to work better :—

But mighty thunder pealed ; the earth it shook,  
 While rattled all the moss-grown giant stones,  
 And Oldom's sunken grave-hill raised itself ;  
 Then started Skiold and Frodè  
 And Svend and Knud and Waldemar,  
 In copper hauberks up, and pointing to  
 Rust-spots of blood on falchion and on shield—  
 They vanished.  
 And in the Gothic aisles high-arched and dim,  
 Wild fluttered of itself the ancient banner  
 Which hung above a hero's bones ;  
 The falchion clattered loud and ceaselessly  
 Within the tomb of Christian the Fourth.  
 By Tordenskiold's chapel on the strand  
 Wild rose the daring mermaids' witching song ;  
 The stones were loosened round about the grave  
 Where lay great Juul ;  
 And Hvidtfeld, clad in a transparent mist,  
 With smiles cherubic beaming on his face,  
 Strayed, arm in arm with his heroic brothers,  
 Along the deep.—G. BORROW.

Here the ground-verse, with trifling exception, being of one fixed length, the perception catches well at the fact that the short lines are introduced with a purpose, they being so disposed as to come in with telling effect. Were the short breaks feeble, the effect would be feeble, for the attention is made to halt on these points in chief.

In a stanza so irregular as the following, the same line repeated, though at unsettled intervals, is more than sufficient to guide the ear, which appears to be the one thing requisite :

Oh, what am I to all,  
 What all to me ?  
 I go forth sad, sad, silent, and alone.

Speak ye of sympathy,  
 Of hearts' communion ?  
 Can two souls yoke  
 And beat and answer each to each ?  
 I only know  
 That such is not for me :  
 I go forth sad, sad, silent, and alone.

If souls so meet,  
 Cease they that weary longing,  
 That yearning after something  
 Undefined ?  
 Find they that resting-place  
 The weary seek for ?  
 I only know  
 Not all the weary rest :  
 I go forth sad, sad, silent, and alone.

Comparatively rare as unrhymed staves are in any form, in quick metre they are hardly found at all ; certainly not to the extent they deserve.

In the following little piece, every line, except the commencing, has one march foot and one quick with the odd syllable ; written continuously this would make a quick succession throughout :—

In the convent of Drontheim,  
 Alone in her chamber  
 Knelt Astred the abbess,  
 At midnight adoring,  
 Beseeching, entreating  
 The Virgin and Mother.  
 She heard in the silence  
 The voice of one speaking,  
 Without in the darkness  
 In gusts of the nightwind,  
 Now louder, now nearer,  
 Now lost in the distance.—LONGFELLOW.

The following is about the most harmonious and altogether most satisfactory combination of mixed feet anywhere met with :—

O mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies,  
 O skilled to sing of time or eternity,  
     God-gifted organ-voice of England,  
     Milton, a name to resound for ages ;

Whose Titan angels Gabriel, Abdiel,  
 Starred from Jehovah's gorgeous armouries,  
     Tower as the deep-domed empyrean  
     Rings to the roar of an angel onset.—TENNYSON.

The quickness in the above, it may be seen, is confined to the foot before the last, and to the first, second, and fourth lines respectively.

The conclusion of a verse by a quick foot, succeeded by a slow one constituting the fall cadence, is a most pleasing form when not overdone ; it might often perhaps serve as a finish to a stave otherwise of march metre, thus :—

None else was with them in that hour  
     Save God and that little child.

Or again :—

With curious faces carved upon their front  
     And dates of the olden time.

The hover, also most undeservedly neglected in general, may be remarked on as forming the last foot in the longer lines of the stave by Tennyson above quoted ; but at the end of a verse its action is far other from what it is in the word 'upon' just cited, where its enlivening effect pronounced naturally nearly equals that of a quick foot.

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## X.

### THE STAVE RHYMED.

FROM their very great number and diversity rhymed staves cannot be so briefly dismissed as the unrhymed, their multiplicity having, in fact, given more trouble of arrangement than any other part of the present task. The plan that has been finally



pursued is to group them after their most prominent peculiarities, and it is confidently hoped a way through the maze has at length been definitely traced. The subject from its extent takes several chapters to dispose of fully, beginning with the shortest and most definite forms.

Here, as elsewhere, it has been found necessary to name as we go. What terms there are in existence, such as song, ode, lay, ballad, dirge, ditty, and even sonnet, do not primarily specify metrical varieties, but classes of composition. One of these, the sonnet, has indeed come to receive restricted application to the form in which the species is ordinarily moulded, and so the class term become limited to one particular variety, but it is somewhat of an exception.

A metrical definition in set terms of any form may of course be given, so many lines of such a length in such a metre arranged so and so, and rhymed so and so, but the need of having recourse to such a roundabout description only makes the want of a proper name doubly apparent.

(1.) The first class of stave may be described as any of the continuous forms previously given, subdivided without further alteration. If rhymed in couplets, the stave will then be generally of two, three, or four couplets; if of alternate rhyming, as far more commonly, it is then of single or double quatrain length, as may be. This class may for the most part be passed over without further comment, as already sufficiently illustrated; it includes the majority of songs, ballads, and minor odes, &c., for which reason be it denominated the *staple* form.

Of lines of different length alternated, the only combinations of any frequency are those of four and three feet in all metres already exemplified.

The following is an instance of five and three-foot thus arranged, somewhat rare comparatively :—

I heard the trailing garments of the Night  
 Sweep through her marble halls !  
 I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light  
 From the celestial walls !

I felt her presence, by its spell of might,  
 Stoop o'er me from above ;  
 The calm majestic presence of the Night,  
 As of the one I love.—LONGFELLOW.

Or the counter-form of the same, beginning with the short line, as in the piece of Sir W. Jones :—

What constitutes a state ?  
 Not high-raised battlement and laboured mound.

Where the difference between the length of the alternating lines is greater than this, the shorter has much of the character of a refrain :—

And my own heart is as the lute  
 I now am waking ;  
 Wound to too fine and high a pitch,  
 They both are breaking.  
 And of the song what memory  
 Will stay behind ?  
 An echo, like a passing thought  
 Upon the mind.  
 Silence, forgetfulness, and rest,  
 Lute, are for thee,  
 And such my lot ; neglect, the grave,  
 These are for me.—LÆTITIA LONDON.

In this with a greater inequality still more so :—

Ah, Love !  
 Perjured, false, treacherous Love !  
 Enemy  
 Of all that mankind may not rue !  
 Most untrue  
 To him who keeps most faith with thee !  
 Woe is me  
 The falcon has the eyes of the dove.  
 Ah, Love !  
 Perjured, false, treacherous Love.—LONGFELLOW.

(2.) Verses are sometimes arranged in triplets, thus :—

A still small voice spake unto me,  
 Thou art so full of misery  
 Were it not better not to be ?

Then to the still small voice I said,  
 Let me not cast in endless shade  
 What is so wonderfully made.—TENNYSON.

Or thus, the middle line of one triplet rhyming with the middle of the next :—

It was my fate to reach a brook at last  
 Which, by sweet-scented bushes fenced around,  
 Defiance bade to heat and nipping blast.

Inclined to rest and hear the wild bird's song,  
 I stretched myself upon the brook's soft bound,  
 And there I fell asleep and slumbered long.—G. BORROW.

Occasionally the inner verses of a quatrain rhyme together, and the outer together :—

You ask me why, though ill at ease,  
 Within this region I subsist,  
 Whose spirit falter in the mist,  
 And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,  
 That sober-suited freedom chose,  
 The land where, girt with friends and foes,  
 A man may speak the thing he will.—TENNYSON.

This arrangement, perhaps best styled *outabout*, is seldom found by itself, oftener as part of a longer stanza.

(3.) A very large number of staves have the general formation of couplet, triplet, or quatrain, alternated with lines of the same or different lengths, generally rhyming together.

There is a word, *roundel*, which it is proposed to adopt out-of-hand for this group in all phases. Rondo and roundelay will still be left if required to supply its place, in the old half-forgotten meaning of a song that began with the burden with which it ended.

'Tis most certain  
 By their flirting,  
 Women oft have envy shown ;  
 Pleased to ruin  
 Others wooing,  
 Never happy in their own.—GAY.

What virtue or what mental grace  
 But men unqualified and base  
     Will boast it their possession?  
 Profusion apes the nobler part  
 Of liberality of heart,  
     And dulness of discretion.—COWPER.

Now and then this arrangement may be found in the counter form with the single line first:—

If, in the days of song,  
 The days of gladness, we have called on thee,  
 When mirthful voices rang from sea to sea,  
     And joyous hearts were strong;  
 Now that alike the feeble and the brave  
 Must cry, We perish!—Father, hear, and save!  
MRS. HEMANS.

Triplet roundel:—

#### THE BROOK.

With pilgrim course I flow,  
 Or in summer's scorching glow,  
 Or o'er moonless wastes of snow,  
     Nor stop, nor stay.  
 For still by high behest  
 To a bright abode of rest,  
 To my parent Ocean's breast,  
     I hasten away.—GRANT.

Similar arrangement, but alternate rhymed throughout:—

#### RURAL LIFE.

Happy the man whose wish, whose care  
     A few paternal acres bound,  
 Content to breathe his native air  
     In his own ground;  
 Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,  
     Whose flocks supply him with attire,  
 Whose trees in summer yield him shade,  
     In winter, fire.—POPE.

With many other forms of rhyming needless to cite, as Shelley's "The Two Spirits" to wit, where the rhymes of the triplets enchain; or Longfellow's "Afternoon in February," where the third line in both trios is left unrhymed.



Quatrain roundel (this variety is not so frequently found as the above) :—

On the ground  
Sleep sound ;  
I'll apply  
To your eye,  
Gentle lover, remedy.

When thou wakest,  
Thou takest  
True delight  
In the sight  
Of thy former lady's eye.—SHAKSPEARE.

#### THE CID'S FUNERAL PROCESSION.

The Moor had beleaguered Valencia's towers,  
And lances gleamed up through her citron bowers,  
And the tents of the desert had girt her plain,  
And camels were trampling the vines of Spain.  
For the Cid was gone to his rest.

There were men from the wilds where the death-wind sweeps,  
There were spears from the hills where the lion sleeps,  
There were bows from sands where the ostrich runs,  
For the shrill horn of Afric had called her sons  
To the battles of the West.—MRS. HEMANS.

Occasionally there are three single lines in the stave, one at both beginning and end ; sometimes, too, the roundel formation is used continuously, that is, not arranged into staves at all.

(4.) In another group may be put those which consist of a quatrain, or other simple arrangement, and appended couplet—a very common form, which may be termed *partlet*.

Rarely, rarely, comest thou,  
Spirit of delight !  
Wherefore hast thou left me now  
Many a day and night ?  
Many a weary night and day  
'Tis since thou hast fled away.—SHELLEY.

Look the world's comforter, with weary gait,  
 His day's hot task has ended in the west :  
 The owl, night's herald, shrieks,—'tis very late ;  
 The sheep are gone to fold, birds to their nest ;  
 And coal-black clouds that shadow heaven's light  
 Do summon us to part and bid good night.—SHAKESPEARE.

To matter or to force  
 The All is not confined ;  
 Beside the law of things  
 Is set the law of mind ;  
 One speaks in rock and star,  
 And one within the brain,  
 In unison at times,  
 And then apart again ;  
 And both in one have brought us hither,  
 That we may know our whence and whither.  
 F. T. PALGRAVE.

The world's a bubble, and the life of man  
 Less than a span :  
 In his conception wretched, from the womb  
 So to the tomb ;  
 Curst from his cradle, and brought up to years  
 With cares and fears.  
 Who then to frail mortality shall trust,  
 But limns on water, or but writes in dust.—LORD BACON.

Instead of a couplet a closing triplet is now and then met with, as in Jean Ingelow's piece, 'The High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire.'

(5.) Often in a stave or otherwise a short line is interjected as a *refrain*. Any great difference of length between alternate lines has, as before stated, the same effect.

God save our gracious King,  
 Long live our noble King,  
     God save the King !  
 Send him victorious,  
 Happy and glorious,  
 Long to reign over us,  
     God save the King!—H. CAREY.

The next is a form peculiar to Burns.

Wee, modest, crimson-tippèd flower,  
 Thou's met me in an evil hour;  
 For I maun crush among the stoure  
     Thy slender stem;  
 To spare thee now is past my power,  
     Thou bonnie gem.

And here is a form that might have been classed as a roundel, and small harm done. These double possibilities do not fail to add to the perplexity of grouping.

Yes, the year is growing old,  
     And his eye is pale and bleared!  
 Death, with frosty hand and cold,  
     Plucks the old man by the beard,  
         Sorely, sorely!  
 The leaves are falling, falling,  
     Solemnly and slow:  
 Caw, caw, the rooks are calling;  
     It is a sound of woe,  
         A sound of woe!—LONGFELLOW.

#### THE RAVEN.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,  
 Soon again I heard a tapping something louder than before.  
 'Surely,' said I, 'surely that is something at my window lattice;  
 Let me see then what thereat is, and this mystery explore—  
 Let my heart be still a moment, and this mystery explore:  
     'Tis the wind, and nothing more.'  
 Open here I flung the shutter, when with many a flirt and flutter,  
 In there flew a saintly Raven of the saintly days of yore.  
 Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;  
 But with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—  
 Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—  
     Perched and sat, and nothing more.—EDGAR A. POE.

(6.) Couplet alternated with couplet of another sort sometimes occurs.

#### A LAY OF THE EARLY ROSE.

A rose once grew within  
 A garden April-green,  
 In her loneliness, in her loneliness,  
 And the fairer for that oneness.—MRS. BROWNING.

## SANTA FILOMENA.

Whene'er a noble deed is wrought,  
 Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,  
 Our hearts in glad surprise,  
 To higher levels rise.

The tidal wave of deeper souls  
 Into our inmost being rolls,  
 And lifts us unawares  
 Out of all meaner cares.—LONGFELLOW.

Couplet and triplet joined, much the same arrangement in its nature, may be cited together with these.

Go, happy Rose, and interwove  
 With other flowers, bind my love.  
 Tell her too, she must not be  
 Longer flowing, longer free,  
 That so oft has fettered me.—HERRICK.

(7.) It is not uncommon to find a certain number of verses interposed between two shorter outer ones.

## REFLECTION.

Ah! who has power to say,  
 To-morrow's sun shall warmer glow,  
 And o'er this gloomy vale of woe  
 Diffuse a brighter ray?—ROBINSON.

## THE GIFTS OF GOD.

When God at first made man,  
 Having a glass of blessings standing by;  
 'Let us,' said he, 'pour on him all we can:  
 Let the world's riches which dispersed lie  
 Contract into a span.'—G. HERBERT.

Similar, save that the intermediate lines are four, is Mrs. Browning's piece entitled 'A Song against Singing.'

In the next the character is entirely that of a refrain alike at opening and close.

In those sweet times,  
 When o'er me childhood shed its purple light,  
 The world seemed some vast garden faërie bright,  
 Through which my spirit wandered plucking flowers,  
 Under fair skies and sunshine-laden hours;



And many a fancy garland then I twined,  
 And many a hope divine employed my mind,  
 In those sweet times.

All the long day,  
 In sunshine would I sit near some old tree,  
 Dreaming o'er Tasso's gorgeous minstrelsy,  
 Of towers, and silver lutes, and ladies gay,  
 Of tilt and tournament, and knightly fray,  
 And songs, old songs, the music of the soul—  
 Those thoughts across my busy brain would roll  
 All the long day.—E. V. KENEALY.

(8.) Besides the forms reserved as better coming in under following sections, there are a certain amount of variants from groups already given, caused by having one line or more longer or shorter than the rest, of which it seems proper to instance a selection.

Variation on triplet from this cause:—

Whoe'er she be,  
 That not impossible She  
 That shall command my heart and me;  
 Where'er she lie,  
 Locked up from mortal eye  
 In shady leaves of destiny.—R. CRASHAW.

Variation on quatrain from ditto, last line cut short:—

All thoughts, all passions, all delights,  
 Whatever stirs this mortal frame,  
 All are but ministers of Love,  
 And feed his sacred flame.—S. T. COLERIDGE.

Another form ditto:—

- (5) Thou in the moon's bright chariot, proud and gay
- (4) Dost thy bright wood of stars survey,  
 And all the year dost with thee bring
- (6) Of thousand flowery lights thine own nocturnal spring.  
 COWLEY.

The variations on longer pieces are infinite, but a few must suffice.

Loudly through the wide-flung door  
 Came the roar  
 Of the sea upon the skerry,

And its thunder loud and near  
 Reached the ear,  
 Mingling with their voices merry.—LONGFELLOW.

Living child or pictured cherub,  
 Ne'er o'ermatched its baby grace;  
 And the mother moving nearer,  
 Looked it calmly in the face,  
 Then with slight and quiet gesture,  
 And with lips that scarcely smiled,  
 Said—'A portrait of my daughter  
 When she was a child.'—JEAN INGELow.

- (4) Out of the bosom of the Air,  
 (5) Out of the cloud-folds of her garments shaken,  
 (4) Over the woodlands brown and bare,  
 Over the harvest-fields forsaken,  
 (3) Silent and soft and slow  
 (2) Descends the snow.—LONGFELLOW.

The next has the same general structure, only instead of shortening the closing couplet runs out.

- (4) Fair rising from her icy couch,  
 Wan herald of the floral year,  
 The snowdrop marks the spring's approach,  
 Ere yet the primrose groups appear,  
 (5) Or peers the arum from its spotted veil,  
 (6) Or odorous violets scent the cold capricious gale.  
 CHARLOTTE SMITH.

## XI.

THIS chapter is a continuation of the last, divided from it on account of the length of the subject more than from any other cause, but as a whole the forms treated are longer.

(1.) The five-lined stave. In this length the first, third, and fourth lines generally rhyme together, or as here the first remains unrhymed.

Othere the old sea-captain  
 Who dwelt in Helgoland,  
 To King Alfred, the Lover of Truth,  
 Brought a snow-white walrus tooth,  
 Which he held in his brown right hand.

His figure was tall and stately,  
 Like a boy's his eye appeared ;  
 His hair was yellow as hay,  
 But threads of a silvery grey  
 Gleamed in his tawny beard.—LONGFELLOW.

If the rest of the lines are of four feet the last one most usually falls to three beats only.

The gorse is yellow on the heath  
 The banks with speedwell flowers are gay,  
 The oaks are budding, and beneath  
 The hawthorn soon will bear the wreath,  
 The silver wreath of May.—CHARLOTTE SMITH.

In the following, lines two and five are alike short.

How sweet the answer Echo makes  
 To music at night,  
 When roused by lute or horn she wakes,  
 And far away o'er lawn and lakes  
 Goes answering light !—T. MOORE.

Another arrangement is this, with the short commencing.

Go, lovely Rose !  
 Tell her that wastes her time and me,  
 That now she knows,  
 When I resemble her to thee,  
 How sweet and fair she seems to be.—WALLER.

In the following we have reduplication of the second line, the result resembling out-about with an additional line.

Palaces with golden domes,  
 Marble fanes, and silver towers,  
 Gardens glittering with flowers,  
 Where sweet Aphrodite roams  
 All the livelong summer hours.—KENEALY.

Many of these forms are again found as components of longer stanzas.

(2.) Among other methods conclusion of a stave is in a few cases made to consist of one or more unrhymed lines, contrasting with the others.

Oh, come and see this lovelet,  
 This little turtle-dovelet,  
 The maidens that are neatest,  
 And tenderest and sweetest,  
 Should buy it to amuse 'em,  
 And nurse it in their bosom.  
 The little pet! young loves to sell!  
 My pretty loves who'll buy?—AYTOUN.

Though the above is a direct exception to the contrary, lines so circumstanced are generally odd-over, which tends greatly to obviate rhyme tendency.

Thora of Rimol! hide me! hide me!  
 Danger and shame and death betide me!  
 For Olaf the King is hunting me down,  
 Through field and forest, through thorp and town!  
 Thus cried Jarl Hakon  
 To Thora, the fairest of women.—LONGFELLOW.

In the roundel form also the single lines are in rare instances left unrhymed.

And up came the goblins that moment, and they  
 Look ghostly and grewsome, and ghostly and grey,  
 Yet they revel and riot it roundly.  
 The beer it has vanished, the pitchers are bare,  
 Then whooping and hooting away through the air,  
 O'er hill and dale clatter the weird ones.

THEODORE MARTIN.

So also in triplets Campbell's piece entitled 'Hohenlinden.'

In the following we have a two-foot quick measure closed by a line of three feet unrhymed in.

And the pedlar answered,  
 From beneath his load,  
 At noon they went streaming  
 Right o'er my road.  
 From the farmsteads the lassies  
 Rushed out to see  
 How they skimmed like swallows  
 Over plough and lea.  
 As they went to the hills  
 What a head they bare!  
 Like a snowdrift scudding  
 On the stormy sea,

And where were the steeds could o'ertake them?—SHAIRP.



(3.) *Longer stanzas* consist very generally of unions of the shorter forms previously passed in review; thus this, a quatrain between two couplets.

{ 'Tis evening : on Abruzzo's hill  
 { The summer's sun is lingering still,  
 { As though unwilling to bereave  
     The landscape of its softest beam ;—  
 { So fair,—one can but look and grieve,  
 { To think that like a lovely dream  
 { A few brief fleeting moments more  
 { Must see its reign of beauty o'er !—ALARIC WATTS.

Gray's 'Ode on a distant prospect of Eton College,' consists of a quatrain and roundel conjoined. Again, we find others composed of two quatrains differently rhymed, and so on. But by no means are stanzas always put together in *parts* like these, though as in the next a single line doing duty in common at the supposed junction is often the sole cause otherwise.

Weighed in the balance, hero dust  
     Is vile as vulgar clay ;  
 Thy scales, Mortality, are just  
     To all that pass away.  
 But yet methought the living great  
 Some higher sparks should animate,  
     To dazzle and dismay ;  
 Nor deemed contempt could thus make mirth  
 Of these the conquerors of the earth.—BYRON.

The following arrangement is one found with tolerable frequency.

And yet, the soul-awakening gleam,  
     That struck perchance the farthest cone  
 Of Scotland's rocky wilds, did seem  
     To visit me and me alone ;  
 Me unapproached by any friend,  
 Save those who to my sorrows lend  
     Tears due unto their own.—WORDSWORTH.

A stanza of good presence and reputation is that used by Byron in his 'Don Juan,' five-foot march, three rhymes of a sort alternated together, closed by a couplet.

I know not why, but in that hour to-night,  
 Even as they gazed, a sudden tremor came  
 And swept as 'twere across their hearts' delight,  
 Like the wind o'er a harpstring, o'er a flame,  
 When one is shook in sound and one in sight;  
 And thus some boding flashed through either frame,  
 And called from Juan's breast a faint low sigh,  
 While one new tear arose in Haidee's eye.

H. H. Milman adopts the following form in a succession of stanzas.

God of the thunder, from whose cloudy seat  
 The fiery winds of desolation blow:  
 Father of vengeance, that with purple feet,  
 Like a full wine-press, treadst the vale below:  
 { The embattled armies wait thy sign to slay,  
 { Nor springs the beast of havoc on his prey,  
 { Nor withering Famine walks his blasted way,  
 Till Thou the guilty land hast sealed for woe.

A certain arrangement of five-foot verse in stanzas of fourteen lines has received the distinctive name of sonnet. The rhymes may be in any order with the limitation that there be only three different endings rhymed on in the first eight lines.

My lute, be as thou wert when thou did grow  
 With thy green mother in some shady grove,  
 When unmelodious winds had made thee move,  
 And birds their romage did on thee bestow.  
 Since that dear voice which did thy sounds approve,  
 Which wont in such harmonious strains to flow,  
 Is reft from earth to tune the spheres above.  
 What art thou then but harbinger of woe?  
 Thy pleasing notes be pleasing notes no more,  
 But orphan wailings to the fainting ear,  
 Each stroke a sigh, each sound draws forth a tear,  
 For which be silent as in woods before:  
 Or if that any hand to touch thee deign,  
 Like widowed turtle still her loss complain.—DRUMMOND.

Here, indeed, there are but two rhyme-endings within the prescribed limits, but it seems there is no regulation

against that. Shakspeare, again, invariably constructs his sonnets of three quatrains quite separate in their rhymes, ending the whole with a couplet: let all, then, please themselves in the matter, as their predecessors have done before them.

(4.) It may not be amiss to group together a certain class of stanzas that have an additional line final drawn out beyond the others to six-foot length, forming what is commonly known as an Alexandrine.

#### ODE TO THE SKYLARK.

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!  
 Bird thou never wert,  
 That from heaven, or near it,  
 Pourest thy full heart,  
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.  
 Higher still and higher  
 From the earth thou springest  
 Like a cloud of fire;  
 The blue deep thou wingest,  
 And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.  
SHELLEY.

#### PRINCE OF THE PURPLE ISLAND.

Look at the sun, whose ray and searching light  
 Here, there, and everywhere itself displays,  
 No nook or corner flies his piercing sight;  
 Yet on himself when he reflects his rays  
 Soon back he flings the too bold venturing gleam,  
 Down to the earth the flames all broken stream;  
 Such is this famous Prince,—such his unpierced beam.  
FLETCHER.

Spenser, in the well-known measure called after his name, has used a stanza of nine lines, all likewise of five feet except the closing one. The rhymes are thus arranged, as the example will best show:—1 and 2; 2, 4, 5, and 7; 6, 8, and 9. This form is used by some even for the highest epic occasions, and, indeed, of stanzas for such a purpose it has few if any to rival it.

## THE ENCHANTED GROUND.

Eftsoons they heard a most melodious sound  
 Of all that mote delight a dainty ear,  
 Such as at once might not on living ground,  
 Save in this paradise be held elsewhere :  
 Right hard it was for wight which did it hear  
 To rede what manner music that mote be :  
 For all that pleasing is to living ear  
 Was there consorted in one harmony,  
 Birds, voices, instruments, winds, waters, all agree.—SPENSER.

Of course there is no innate necessity that such a long final line should always be of six feet precisely ; here is one of eight.

## THE LOST BOWER.

I rose up in exaltation  
 And an inward trembling heat,  
 And it seemed in geste of passion  
 Dropped the music to my feet,  
 Like a garment rustling downwards!—such a silence followed it.  
 MRS. BROWNING.

(5.) There remains to notice the stanzas which have their parts composed of different runs, as this beginning in march-metre, closed with a couplet tripping.

## FAIRY'S SONG.

Come follow, follow me,  
 Ye fairy elves that be ;  
 Light tripping o'er the green,  
 Come follow Mab, your queen !  
 Hand in hand we'll dance around,  
 For this place is fairy ground.

The lines being short the change in this instance is hardly noticeable ; in the next example, longer in part, the effect can hardly be called pleasing.

On his morning rounds the master  
 Goes to learn how all things fare ;  
 Searches pasture after pasture,  
 Sheep and cattle eyes with care ;



And for silence or for talk  
 He hath comrades in his walk;  
 Four dogs, each pair of different breed,  
 Distinguished two for scent, and two for speed.

WORDSWORTH.

In Shelley's 'Ode to the Skylark,' quoted a little previously a like turn results in a charming effect, but it must be observed that in this the change is an imperceptible one; in the degree that it strikes it displeases. Hence, the greater the difference between the metres the worse the impression, the change from one to the other becoming hard to fall in with, the two seem to clash, and there is a perceptible discordance, as here.

Mahadeh earth's lord descending  
 To its mansions comes again,  
 That like man with mortals blending,  
 He may feel their joy and pain;  
 Stoops to try life's varied changes,  
 And with human eyes to see,  
 Ere he praises or avenges,  
 What their fitful lot may be.

He has passed through the city, he has looked on them all;  
 He has watched o'er the great, nor forgotten the small,  
 And at evening went forth on his journey so free.—AYTOUN.

The change in this case is seen to be extreme, and the antagonism consequently very striking.

This condemnation of the undue junction of discordant parts in a set stave must not be held to reflect on the allowable blending in the greater ode, to be noticed shortly, where see end of chapter xiv.

## XII.

### THE LAY.

IN one stanzic measure the rhymes are allowed to assume every possible variation of arrangement, the lines generally of two slightly different lengths, one predominant, the stanzas

themselves varying greatly in the number of lines. It is proposed to restrict the name *lay* exclusively to formations of this kind, which indeed have to it almost a native title existing.

Nearly every form of stave previously cited here finds itself embodied in longer complicate stanzas; again, almost any combination met with in the lay is found used in independent form.

1. To begin with march-metre.

The standard length for the predominant line is four feet, for the other three; with stanzas varying from about sixteen lines to three times that length.

An arrangement similar to the lay is to be met with in the short form of three and two feet following, but *ditty* might be the more appropriate name than lay in this particular instance.

Make no deep scrutiny  
 Into her mutiny  
     Rash and undutiful;  
 Past all dishonour,  
 Death has left on her  
     Only the beautiful.

Still for all slips of hers,  
     One of Eve's family,  
 Wipe those poor lips of hers  
     Oozing so clammyly.

Loop up her tresses  
     Escaped from the comb,  
 Her fair auburn tresses,  
 Whilst wonderment guesses  
     Where was her home?  
 Who was her father?  
     Who was her mother?  
 Had she a sister?  
     Had she a brother?  
 Or was there a dearer one  
 Still, and a nearer one  
     Yet, than all other?—HOOD.

Macaulay in his lays has used a three-foot measure, varied by occasional lines of four.

The horsemen and the footmen  
 Are pouring in amain,  
 From many a stately market-place;  
 From many a fruitful plain;  
 From many a lonely hamlet  
 Which hid by beech and pine,  
 Like an eagle's nest, hangs on the crest  
 Of purple Apennine.

\* \* \* \* \*

Meanwhile the Tuscan army,  
 Right glorious to behold,  
 Came flashing back the noonday light,  
 Rank behind rank like surges bright  
 Of a broad sea of gold.  
 Four hundred trumpets sounded  
 A peal of warlike glee  
 As that great host with measured tread,  
 And spears advanced and ensigns spread,  
 Rolled slowly towards the bridge's head,  
 Where stood the dauntless Three.

Scott is the best exemplifier of the standard form of the lay, as in his 'Lady of the Lake,' 'Marmion,' 'Lay of the Last Minstrel,' &c.

Next morn the Baron climbed the tower,  
 To view afar the Scottish power,  
 Encamped on Flodden edge:  
 The white pavilions made a show,  
 Like remnants of the winter snow,  
 Along the dusky ridge.  
 Long Marmion looked ;—at length his eye  
 Unusual movement might descry  
 Amid the shifting lines:  
 The Scottish host drawn out appears,  
 And flashing on the edge of spears,  
 The eastern sunbeam shines.  
 Their front now deepening, now extending;  
 Their flank inclining, wheeling, bending,  
 Now drawing back and now descending,  
 The skilful Marmion well could know  
 They watched the motions of some foe  
 Who traversed on the plain below.

The lay, among its other variations, occasionally allows quick-foot intermixture as freely as this.

If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright,  
 Go visit it by the pale moonlight;  
 For the gay beams of lightsome day  
 Gild but to flout the ruins gray.  
 When the broken arches are black in night,  
 And each shafted oriel glimmers white;  
 When the cold lights uncertain shower  
 Streams on the ruined central tower;  
 When buttress and buttress alternately,  
 Seemed framed of ebon and ivory;  
 When silver edges the imagery,  
 And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die.

Or again,

Merrily, merrily goes the bark  
 On a breeze from the northward free,  
 So shoots from the morning-sky the lark,  
 Or the swan through the summer-sea.  
 The shores of Mull on the eastward lay,  
 And Ulva dark, and Colonsay,  
 And all the group of islets gray  
 That guard famed Staffa round.  
 When all unknown its columns rose,  
 Where dark and undisturbed repose  
 The cormorant had found.

It admits even a succession of triplets.

And art thou cold and lowly laid,  
 The foeman's dread, the people's aid,  
 Breadalbane's boast, Clan-Alpine's shade!  
 For thee shall none a requiem say?  
 For thee, who loved the minstrel's lay,—  
 For thee, of Bothwell's house the stay,  
 The shelter of her exiled line,  
 E'en in this prison-house of thine,  
 I'll weep for Alpine's honoured pine.

Verses of five and four feet are occasionally found in the same admixture, though not often. The odes of Pindar have been done into English verse of this description by Abraham Moore, from which the subjoined. This writer admits an occasional verse of six feet also.



Their past Olympic feats have graced my song;  
 The future in their joyous day,  
 Hopes, promise, shall the muse display:  
 But fortunes and events to heaven belong.  
 Smile but their natal genius from above,  
 The rest to Mars we'll trust and ruling Jove.  
 Yet must I name their Pythian boughs,  
 Their wreaths from Thebes, from Argos brought:  
 And Jove's Lycæan altar knows  
 Their countless wonders in Arcadia got.

2. If the lay were formed in tripping metre, a kind of verse used at large by no poet yet, it would comprise, among others, such forms as these.

All are sleeping, weary heart!  
 Thou, thou only, sleepless art!  
 { All this throbbing, all this aching,  
 { Evermore shall keep thee waking,  
 { For a heart in sorrow breaking  
 Thinketh ever of its smart!

Couldst thou look as dear as when  
 First I sighed for thee,  
 Couldst thou make me feel again  
 Ev'ry wish I breathed thee then,  
 Oh how blissful life would be!  
 Hopes that now beguiling leave me,  
 Joys that lie in slumbers cold,  
 All would wake, couldst thou but give me  
 One dear smile like those of old.—T. MOORE.

Soldier rest! thy warfare o'er,  
 Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking!  
 Dream of battled fields no more,  
 Days of danger, nights of waking,  
 In our isle's enchanted hall,  
 Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,  
 Fairy strains of music fall,  
 Every muse in slumber dewing.  
 Soldier rest! thy warfare o'er,  
 Dream of fighting fields no more:  
 Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,  
 Morn of toil nor night of waking.—SCOTT.

3. *The Lay in Quick Metre*.—If neither in quick metre the lay has much recognised standing, still it is convenient to

group forms under, which otherwise must be presented as irregular varieties of stanza, on no principle whatever.

Cold, by this, was the midnight air;  
 But the Abbot's blood ran colder,  
 When he saw a gasping knight lie there,  
 With a gash beneath his clotted hair,  
 And a hump upon his shoulder.

And the loyal churchman strove in vain  
 To mutter a Pater Noster:  
 For he who writhed in mortal pain,  
 Was camped that night on Bosworth plain,  
 The cruel Duke of Gloster.—PRAED.

The wine-month shone in its golden prime,  
 And the red grapes clustering hung,  
 But a deeper sound through the Switzer's clime,  
 Than the vintage music rung—  
 A sound through vaulted cave,  
 A sound through echoing glen,  
 Like the hollow swell of the rushing wave,—  
 'Twas the tread of steel-girt men.—MRS. HEMANS.

The war-note of the Saracen  
 Was on the winds of France;  
 It had stilled the harp of the troubadour,  
 And the clash of the tourney's lance.  
 The sounds of the sea, and the sounds of the night,  
 And the hollow echoes of charge and flight,  
 Were around Clotilde, as she knelt to pray  
 In a chapel where the mighty lay,  
 On the old Provençal shore:  
 Many a Chatillon beneath,  
 Unstirred by the ringing trumpets' breath,  
 His shroud of armour wore.  
 But meekly the voice of the lady rose  
 Through the trophies of their proud repose:  
 And her fragile frame at every blast  
 That full of the savage warhorn passed,  
 Trembling, as trembles a bird's quick heart  
 When it vainly strives from its cage to part,—  
 So knelt she in her woe.—MRS. HEMANS.

## XIII.

## MID-RHYME FORMATIONS.

INTERMEDIATE between continuous linear use and the stave, having connections with one and the other, according as written, may be cited formations produced by mid-rhyme.

A line of seven feet may have two interior rhymes at the end of the second and fourth feet alike, as well as a different one at the close.

## THE NUT-BROWN MAID.

Be it right or wrong, these men among, on women do complain,  
Affirming this, how that it is a labour spent in vain  
To love them well, for never a deal they love a man again;  
For let a man do what he can their favour to attain,  
Yet if a new do them pursue, their first true lover then  
Laboureth for nought, for from her thought he is a banished man.

I say not nay, but that all day it is both writ and said,  
That woman's faith is as who saith all utterly decayed;  
But nevertheless right good witness in this case might be laid,  
That they love true and continue; record the Nut-brown Maid;  
Which from her love, when her to prove he came to make his moan,  
Would not depart, for in her heart she loved but him alone.

This, like other seven feet formations, is more often written thus, having then a single mid-rhyme:—

I sift the snow on the mountains below,  
And the great pines groan aghast;  
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,  
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.  
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,  
Lightning my pilot sits;  
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,  
It struggles and howls at fits.—SHELLEY.

Sometimes certain stanzas of a ballad will have a mid-rhyme additional thus placed, others not. Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner' is an instance.

But a further subdivision following the membership is

perhaps more frequent still, bringing us to the form already familiar in roundel:—

Arethusa arose  
 From her couch of snows  
 In the Acroceraunian mountains,—  
 From cloud and from crag  
 With many a jag,  
 Shepherding her bright fountains.  
 She leapt down the rocks  
 With her rainbow locks  
 Streaming among the streams;—  
 Her steps paved with green  
 The downward ravine  
 Which slopes to the western gleams.—SHELLEY.

The connection between this shape and the ordinary line thus becomes apparent; at the same time it is seen necessary not to confuse the order of rhyming under notice with this particular way of writing it. From its enlivening effect in whatever mode arranged into verses, it might not be amiss to denominate this succession of rhymes *speedwell*.

In a stave of four feet the rhymes may be three of a sort successive, thus:—

If sadly thinking, with spirits sinking,  
 Could more than drinking my cares compose,  
 A cure for sorrow from sighs I'd borrow  
 And hope to-morrow would end my woes.  
 But as in wailing there's nought availing,  
 And death unfailing will strike the blow.  
 Then for that reason, and for a season,  
 Let us be merry before we go!—CURRAN.

But this third rhyme is not preserved on subdivision into the roundel:—

O may I steal  
 Along the vale,  
 Of humble life secure from foes;  
 My friends sincere,  
 My judgment clear,  
 And gentle business my repose.—YOUNG.

Verses may be so diversified by the single expedient of division at the mid-rhyme, as to assume the aspect of another



measure altogether, as in this used by Ingoldsby Barham, in his well-known Legends:—

Out and spake Sir Ingoldsby Bray  
A stalwart knight I ween was he,  
‘Come east, come west,  
Come lance in rest,  
Come falchion in hand, I’ll tackle the best  
Of all the Soldan’s chivalrie!’

\* \* \* \* \*

Out and spake Sir Ingoldsby Bray :  
‘What news? what news? come tell to me!  
What news? what news, thou little footpage?  
I’ve been whacking the foe, till it seems an age  
Since I was in Ingoldsby Hall so free!  
What news? what news from Ingoldsby Hall?  
Come tell me now, thou page so small!’  
‘Oh hawk and hound  
Are safe and sound  
Beast in byre, and steed in stall;  
And the watch-dog’s bark,  
As soon as it’s dark,  
Bays wakeful guard around Ingoldsby Hall.’

The diversity introduced into the stave and stanza by the same expedient is equally notable.

Come Hope, thou little cheating sprite,  
And let us set the quarrel right;  
Come thou to me,  
Or I to thee,  
No matter so we both agree.—CUMBERLAND.

As here, it is generally used to form the close, where, with the concluding line, it is equivalent to a demi-roundel:—

Once again the voice beside her sounded,  
Low and faint, and solemn was its tone—  
‘Nor by form nor by shade am I surrounded,  
Fleshly home and dwelling have I none.  
They are passed away—  
Woe is me! to-day  
Hath robbed me of myself, and made me lone.’—AYTOUN.  
More swift than lightning can I fly  
About their airy welkin soon,  
And in a minute’s space descry  
Each thing that’s done beneath the moon:

There's not a hag  
 Or ghost shall wag,  
 Or cry 'Ware goblin!' where I go;  
 But Robin I  
 Their feats will spy,  
 And send them home with ho, ho, ho!—BEN JONSON.

In the next we have the mid-rhyme pair unequal, and surpassing in some the average line, whence the shortening of the final line to make up, which however was not imperative.

At anchor in Hampton roads we lay,  
 On board of the Cumberland sloop of war:  
 And at times from the fortress across the bay  
 The alarum of drums swept past,  
 Or a bugle blast  
 From the camp on the shore.—LONGFELLOW.

In the following, though the line is left undivided, we have an approach to the out-about:—

We are born of the golden Sun,  
 Of the Star, of the Wave, of Air,  
 Of the Flowers of Light, that make earth bright,  
 As though it an Elysium were.

We soar on the wide serene,  
 We float o'er the eyes of earth,  
 We dance in the beam, on the flashing stream,  
 And sing round the Poet's birth.—E. V. KENEALY.

To conclude with a piece of which the long ballad swing is hardly to be surpassed.

Up the long broomy loan, wi' mickle dool and moan,  
 And out upon the hillside track,  
 Nurse Flory forward bent, crooning as she went,  
 With the wee bairn clinging on her back.

But Moira hand in hand with Marion forward ran,  
 Nor dool, nor any care had they,  
 But they chased the heather bee, and they sang aloud for glee,  
 As they hied up the mountain way.—J. C. SHAIRP.

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## XIV.

## REMAINING FORMS OF THE ODE.

THE following specimens as distinguished from others before treated, with the exception of the lay, are more diversified in form and aspect, gradually becoming still further so in the higher varieties, till at length resemblance between one stanza and another is not even aimed at.

The shorter forms that remain have generally something fantastic, or at least individual, in their structure, which removes them from others.

Fair Daffodils, we weep to see  
 You haste away so soon ;  
 As yet the early rising sun  
 Has not attained his noon.  
                   Stay, stay,  
 Until the hasting day  
                   Has run,  
 But to the evensong ;  
 And having prayed together, we  
 Will go with you along.—HERRICK.

Another little fanciful piece, addressed by the same poet to ‘ Blossoms’ :—

Fair pledges of a fruitful tree,  
 Why do ye fall so fast ?  
 Your date is not so past,  
 But you may stay yet here awhile,  
 To blush and gently smile  
 And go at last.

Arise, arise, arise !  
 There is blood on earth that denies ye bread ;  
   Be your wounds like eyes  
 To weep for the dead, the dead, the dead.  
 { What other griefs were it just to pay ?  
 { Your sons, your wives, your brethren were they ;  
 { Who said they were slain on the battle-day ?—SHELLEY.

That time is dead for ever, child,  
 Drowned, frozen, dead for ever;  
     We look on the past  
     And stare aghast  
 At the spectres wailing, pale and ghast,  
 Of hopes which thou and I beguiled  
 To death on Life's dark river.—SHELLEY.

The next approaches more to the lay, save that the short lines are of two lengths:—

King Christian stood besides the mast;  
     Smoke, mixt with flame,  
 Hung o'er his guns, that rattled fast  
 Against the Gothman, as they passed,  
 Then sunk each hostile sail and mast  
     In smoke and flame.  
 'Fly,' said the foe, 'fly all that can,  
 Nor wage with Denmark's Christian,  
     The dread unequal game.'—G. BORROW.

Milton's 'Ode on the Nativity' is but a roundel closed by an unequal couplet:—

Such music as, 'tis said,  
 Before was never made,  
 But when of old the sons of morning sung,  
     While the Creator great  
     His constellations set,  
 And the well balanced world on hinges hung,  
     And cast the dark foundations deep,  
     And bid the weltering waves their oozy channels keep.

The next is a double quatrain of unusual length of line:—

- (5) Away, away! to thy sad and silent home,  
     Pour bitter tears on its desolated earth,  
     Watch the dim shades as like ghosts they go and come,  
 (6) And complicate strange webs of melancholy mirth.  
 (7) The leaves of wasted autumn woods shall float around thine head;  
 (6) The blooms of dewy spring shall gleam beneath thy feet;  
     But thy soul or this world must fade in the frost that binds the dead,  
 (7) Ere midnight's frown and morning's smile, ere thou and peace  
     may meet.—SHELLEY.

The following ode to the nightingale would be regular five foot but for one line cut short. In rhymes it is a quatrain



succeeded by the unusual arrangement of three single lines together, pairing three consecutive after them.

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains  
 My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,  
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains  
 One minute past, and Lethewards had sunk:  
 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,  
 But being too happy in thy happiness,  
 That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,  
 In some melodious plot,  
 Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,  
 Singest of summer in full-throated ease.—KEATS.

#### BATTLE OF THE BALTIC.

Of Nelson and the North,  
 Sing the glorious day's renown,  
 When to battle fierce came forth  
 All the might of Denmark's crown,  
 And her arms along the deep proudly shone;  
 By each gun the lighted brand,  
 In a bold determined hand,  
 And the prince of all the land  
 Led them on.

Like leviathans afloat  
 Lay their bulwarks on the brine;  
 While the sign of battle flew  
 On the lofty British line;  
 It was ten of April morn by the chime:  
 As they drifted on their path,  
 There was silence deep as death;  
 And the boldest held his breath  
 For a time.—CAMPBELL.

In the following observe the forceful effect of the alliteration in the lines, already remarkable by being in a run different from the others; also observe the progressive lengthening out of the stanza onward.

#### THE BARD.

'Ruin seize thee, ruthless King!                   (trip)  
 Confusion on thy banners wait!  
 Though fanned by Conquest's crimson wing,  
 They mock the air with idle state.

Helm nor hauberk's twisted mail, (trip)  
 Nor e'en thy virtues, tyrant, shall avail  
 To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,  
 From Cambria's curse, from Cambria's tears.'  
 Such were the sounds that o'er the crested pride  
 Of the first Edward scattered wild dismay,  
 As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side  
 He wound, with toilsome march, his long array,  
 Stout Gloster stood aghast, in speechless trance ;  
 'To arms!' cried Mortimer, and couched his quivering lance.

GRAY.

When the lines of an ode are very diversified in length, and there is great inequality between different stanzas, both in this respect and in the number of verses, it is customary to call the ode Pindaric, though *irregular* would be the much more appropriate term, for the arrangement followed by Pindar of set strophes and anti-strophes, whether observed or not, is utterly out of court in English.

The irregular ode is mostly written in stanzas varying from fourteen to twenty-eight lines, the rhymes arranged in any way thought fit, and between lines of length most different ; indeed, irregularity in rhyming, as in other points, may be said to be the rule.

The next, however, though so very irregular, yet preserves the same form through every stanza.

Hear the sledges with the bells,  
     Silver bells !  
 What a world of merriment their melody foretells !  
     How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,  
     In the icy air of night !  
 While the stars that over-sprinkle  
 All the heavens seem to twinkle  
     With a crystalline delight ;  
 Keeping time, time, time,  
 In a sort of Runic rhyme  
 To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells  
     From the bells, bells, bells, bells,  
     Bells, bells, bells—  
 From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

EDGAR POE.

Like as this piece indicates in its movement the chiming of bells, so does the following 'Milking Song,' or cow-call, the open monotonous note of a horn appropriate:—

'Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!' calling,  
 'For the dews will soon be falling;  
 Leave your meadow grasses mellow,  
     Mellow, mellow;  
 Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow,  
 Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot;  
 Quit the stalks of parsley hollow,  
     Hollow, hollow;  
 Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,  
     From the clovers lift your head;  
 Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot,  
 Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,  
     Jetty, to the milking shed.'—JEAN INGELow.

#### MILTON'S ALLEGRO.

This poem begins thus irregularly, and then merges into lines of four-feet trip and march interchangeable, in which it continues to the end:—

Hence, loathed Melancholy,  
 Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born,  
     In Stygian cave forlorn,  
 'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!  
     Find out some uncouth cell,  
 Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,  
     And the night-raven sings;  
 There under ebon shades, and low-browed rocks,  
     As ragged as thy locks,  
 In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.  
 But come, thou goddess fair and free,  
 In heaven yclept Euphrosyne,  
 And by men heart-easing Mirth;  
 Whom lovely Venus at a birth, &c.

#### ODE TO THE PASSIONS.

The body of this poem is of the nature of the piece subjoined, but it has a fore and after stanza of almost regular four-feet:—

But thou, O Hope, with eyes so fair,  
     What was thy delighted measure ?  
     Still it whispered promised pleasure,  
 And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail !  
     Still would her touch the strain prolong,  
 And from the rocks, the woods, the vale,  
     She called on Echo still through all her song ;  
     And when her sweetest theme she chose,  
     A soft responsive voice was heard at every close,  
 And Hope enchanted smiled, and waved her golden hair.  
 And longer had she sung—but, with a frown,  
     Revenge impatient rose :  
 He threw his bloodstained sword in thunder down,  
     And, with a withering look,  
     The war-denouncing trumpet took,  
 And blew a blast so loud and dread  
 Were ne'er prophetic sounds so full of woe !  
     And ever and anon he beat  
     The doubling drum with furious heat ;  
 And though sometimes, each dreary pause between,  
     Dejected Pity at his side, &c.—COLLINS.

## ALEXANDER'S FEAST.

This, the most varied and the most elevated of all odes,  
 should by rights be quoted in full, deserving of study as it is  
 throughout, and more illustrative in the changeful variety of  
 its metre than any other ; but less must suffice.

'Twas at the royal feast, for Persia won  
     By Philip's warlike son :  
     Aloft in awful state  
     The godlike hero sate  
     On his imperial throne.  
 His valiant peers were placed around,  
 Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound ;  
     So should desert in arms be crowned.  
     The lovely Thaïs by his side,  
     Sat like a blooming Eastern bride,  
     In flower of youth, and beauty's pride.  
     Happy, happy, happy pair !  
     None but the brave,  
     None but the brave,  
     None but the brave deserve the fair.

\* \* \* \* \*



Now strike the golden lyre again :  
 A louder yet, and yet a louder strain.  
 Break his bands of sleep asunder,  
 And rouse him, like a rattling peal of thunder.  
     Hark, hark ! the horrid sound  
     Has raised up his head  
     As awaked from the dead,  
 And amazed he stares around.  
 Revenge, revenge ! Timotheus cries,  
     See the Furies arise,  
     See the snakes that they rear,  
     How they hiss in their hair.  
 And the sparkles that flash from their eyes !  
     Behold a ghastly band,  
     Each a torch in his hand ;  
 These are Grecian ghosts that in battle were slain,  
     And unburied remain,  
     Inglorious on the plain ;  
     Give the vengeance due  
     To the valiant crew :  
 Behold how they toss their torches on high !  
     How they point to the Persian abodes,  
 And glittering temples of their hostile gods !—  
     The princes applaud with a furious joy,  
     And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy ;  
     Thais led the way  
     To light him to his prey,  
 And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.—DRYDEN.

In no ode in the whole language is the change of numbers so well and dexterously managed as in this, the entire gamut of quick and slow feet being run together without the least hitch or strain.

Where, as here, irregular stanzas affect to abandon their own control to impulse, it is not too much to expect that the variations of tone employed should, as in this specimen, show sufficient poetic cause, the movement being put under exclusive control of the sense.

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## XV.

## REVERT.

THE slight metrical importance of this measure, the representative of the ancient dactyl, was stated when first the rhythm was named. It only exists at all under sharply defined conditions.

It is found that when a member of three feet opens with what has been called the strong beginning, which puts the first accents three apart, while in the next, and only other foot, they approach a syllable nearer, that from this propinquity the latter accent is so proportionally weakened, the first and second monopolise the stress between them, and so doing make their expression in the backward rhythm.

This effect, however, by no means takes place where such a member is only casual in the rhythm running the other way, as

‘Much must remain unthought.’

Complete the line, ‘and more untold,’ and no longer any doubt of which is the correct run is possible.

But in a succession of lines of the character described the reversion is most marked and distinct.

But when I older grew,  
Joining a corsair’s crew,  
O’er the dark sea I flew,  
    With the marauders.

Wild was the life we led;  
Many the souls that sped,  
Many the hearts that bled,  
    By our stern orders.—LONGFELLOW.

The short lines, it is seen, consort very well with the others under the influence of their attraction; but by themselves they are too short to have any determinable run; their scanning as they stand alone may be made as well in one way as another.

I am the God Thor,  
 I am the War God,  
 I am the Thunderer!  
 Here in my Northland,  
 My fastness and fortress,  
 Reign I for ever!

Here amid icebergs  
 Rule I the nations:  
 This is my hammer,  
 Miölner the mighty;  
 Giants and sorcerers  
 Cannot withstand it.—LONGFELLOW.

The combinations of the two members in longer lines is exemplified in the next piece.

The two first lines not having the cesura immediately previous to the third accent are in a different run to the rest.

The next two long lines are simply equivalent to one of the long and one of the short conjoined, side by side, and the reversion is maintained throughout.

Had I a cave on some wild distant shore,  
 Where the winds howl to the waves' dashing roar;  
     There would I weep my woes,  
     There seek my last repose,  
     Till grief my eyes should close,  
     Ne'er to wake more.

Falsest of womankind! canst thou declare  
 All my fond plighted vows—fleeting as air!  
     To thy new lover hie,  
     Laugh o'er thy perjury,  
     Then in thy bosom try

What peace is there!—BURNS.

Stars of the summer night!  
     Far in your azure deeps,  
 Hide, hide your golden light!  
     She sleeps!  
     My lady sleeps!  
     Sleeps!

Moon of the summer night!  
     Far down yon western steep,  
 Sink, sink, in silver light!  
     She sleeps  
     My lady sleeps  
     Sleeps!—LONGFELLOW.

In the next some of the verses appear to run one way, some the other, determination resting with cesural contingencies, the four lines marked having the break immediately after the sixth syllable, and before the third accent, are qualified to rank as revert, the others not, unless purposely so constrained.

- Backward, turn backward, oh Time, in your flight,  
 \* Make me a child again just for to-night,  
 Mother, come back from the echoless shore,  
 Take me again to your heart as of yore,  
 Kiss from my forehead the furrows of care,  
 \* Smoothe the few silver threads out of my hair,  
 Over my slumbers your loving watch keep,  
 \* Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep,  
 \* Watch o'er thy child, mother, rock me to sleep.

It is by no means wished to be asserted that the above is in two different metres, but that the revert is a form to which verses of a certain construction have a tolerable leaning, so much so that there is no violence done in accounting them that way, rather the contrary. In mixed instances like the last the choice lies open, and any reader personally decides for the one or the other as he gives the intonation.

A hover in the last place from the mental desire of connecting an accent therewith, consequently making a revert foot in that place, will, from attraction, have a tendency to assimilate the preceding part of the line to the same run if the structure favour, as in the two prior lines of the following stave. Under this ruling, each of the lines indicated becomes of four feet revert regular.

Glaucon of Lesbos, the son of Euphorion,  
 Burned for Corinna the blue-eyed Milesian ;  
 Nor father nor mother had she ;  
 Beauty and wealth had the orphan.

Short was the wooing, and fixed was the wedding-day,  
 Nuptial dues paid to the Fates, and to Artemis :  
 But envy not lovers their bliss,  
 Brief is the bliss of a mortal.—BULWER LYTTON.

If it be conceded that this is the natural run of these verses it renders them incapable of harmonious connection with

the other part of the stave, which is decidedly in the forward run.

To obviate such disaccordance, one inclines on the whole to order the entire stanza on the forward run, though the conflicting tendencies create a sort of dubiousness. It may be remarked that had the third line opened with the strong beginning as the fourth does, the rhythmic connection of parts would have been closer, there not then occurring three successive unaccented syllables between them together as now.

From what was stated when first drawing the distinction between forward and backward rhythm, it is evident that the estimation of verses by the poetic run alone is not altogether fair to the class expressly designed for music, that of songs, &c. An important modification often thus comes about with regard to pace; where, as here, for instance, musically ruled, an elegy no longer appears a gallop.

Oh breathe not his name, let it sleep in the shade,  
Where cold and unhonoured his relics are laid;  
Sad, silent, and dark, be the tears that we shed,  
As the night dew that falls on the grass o'er his head.

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## XVI.

### ON RHYME, HALF-RHYME, ALLITERATION, ETC.

THE practice of rhyme has been illustrated at some length; we will now subject it to a little interior scrutiny, and see besides what modifications of it may be used as substitutes.

It is an anomaly that rhyme, being of so great metrical avail, it has not been received into greater favour among us; but except at the time of Pope, when sovereign fashion brought French modes into currency, our highest have almost invariably looked askance at rhyme, and scorned to be called rhymers.

In opposition to those not of the craft, who are apt to think that the whole art of poetry consists in the truly



wonderful feat of finding one word that jingles with another, they have generally held rhyming as a sort of degradation which the supposed inferiority of their tongue to the so-called classical languages compelled them to undergo. They may have been in error, but such was their opinion.

Shelley, in his first work, 'Queen Mab,' made an attempt to dispense with rhyme in the lyric. The success may not have been striking, but the intent is plain. Southey, again, Wordsworth, Milton, anti-rhymists: and who not, except Byron?

What Shakspeare thought of rhyme, if he at all expressed his own sentiments under the personality of Hotspur, may be judged from this:—

I had rather be a kitten and cry mew,  
Than one of those same metre ballad mongers.

For this general disesteem there must surely be some latent cause, notwithstanding that most of the carping to which rhyme has been subjected is solely owing to its being unclassic, and accordingly of disputed title to legitimacy.

It may be urged that, if any poets felt contempt for rhyming, they could and would have abstained from the practice. But from the scarcity of unrhymed forms, strict blank verse—in fact until a very recent date—and no other, choice may be said to have been debarred them. They might, indeed, have hit out for themselves new metres, as well at an early day as at a late; but in this, from whatever cause, they have been most backward. How, indeed, should they not be backward? Anything approaching innovation from an unknown writer would simply not be 'heard of,' while those who had made their way by the beaten track could not be expected to be over-zealous in devising others.

The connection between rhyme and melody is the next point to be discussed. First, what is melody itself? Over and above the mere amount of warbling incident to a large employment of vowels, it rests entirely on the lesser kind of rhyming which consists in ringing changes upon foregone

sounds—the same vowel with another consonant, or with its own diphthong, the same consonant with another vowel, and so on. Beyond this modulation and timing, melody of verse has no other elements. Music is as the vowel, rendered infinitely impressionable by being entirely dis severed from the consonant, reduced from articulation to vibration only.

If we examine a melodious Greek passage, such as the opening of the *Odyssey*, we shall perceive that the instances of half-rhyme, alliteration, and every variety of approach to repetition of foregone sounds, are absolutely too multitudinous to indicate; the whole verse is alive with their playing and combining, like a sunset sky with irradiate tints.

In English, of course, there cannot be melody to the same extent. Where, indeed, should we find in it such a word as *ἡελλίοιο* (ee-el-ly-oi-oh), for instance? What is more, syllables in Greek being shorter, repetitions to the same amount cannot have with us equivalent effect; for evidently *o* and *oo* resemble each other much more than *on* does *too* or *took*; *ay* and *aw* much more than *slack* and *gnawn*; and so on, the longer the syllables, and the more individual, the less telling under-rhyming modulants.

Rhyme is too intense for melody; it is the caricature of it, nothing more. Suppose it, say, the aggregation of melody into one spot—but is melody a thing that can be aggregated? Melody is rather numerosity, a blending murmur, than one full concordance. Melody is as effectually silenced by rhyme as the tones of a flute under the beating of a drum.

It is impossible to suppose that the Greeks should never have thought of rhyming, so simple an expedient as the clinking of two verses at their close must have come before every verse maker, whether or no. Its very absence in their verses is a proof that the jangle was noticed and avoided. The subtle play of inner melody must expire strangled, to allow the growth of this abnormal accretion.

Rhyme, however, whatever may be its failings, is not to be charged with the actual subversion of melody in English, for

what with the small telling effect in our tongue of modulants in general as stated above, and the mute character of most unaccented vowels, there is really very little play of melody proper for it to overpower.

Rhyme, then, though it really does stand with us moderns instead of melody, is not to be mistaken for it; it is a coarse substitute, not the real article.

The prime failing of rhyme is its assertive bounce, just the quality that makes it so prominent in all verses wherein it enters, gaining them the by-name of rhymes—in a word, its vulgarity. This being the case, even if rather felt by the poets than apprehended in so many words, is doubtless the underlying cause why so many have ranged themselves as its opponents, and sought to dispense with its use.

It is the metrical function it performs, its utility apparent in so many metres, quite transforming them, and thereby more than doubling the poet's instruments, that constitutes the true defence of rhyming. And this should be borne in mind,—whatever its failings, its expediency far more than compensates.

Where melody is not particularly required, rhyme forms a most excellent substitute to impart liveliness and vigour; when pointedness of expression is the aim, not Grecian numerosity so admirable; but it tends to draggletail the Muse exalted. What is more, the full concordance which may be most agreeable in a lyric only palls when kept up through a length-long epic.

In all poems it is usual to insist with great urgency that rhyme, when used, must be a full consonance, and nothing short of it. Now is this rational or irrational?

Those who seek perfect rhyme should, of course, accomplish their endeavours, but their example should not be held binding over such as may desire to emancipate themselves a little from such fetters. The code of the rhymester is, however, sought to be enforced dogmatically; a perfect rhyme, or none at all. This we emphatically impugn, and deny



legislative competence on matters of personal taste, of which this is one.

That something of these opinions has been held before to-day, take the following letter from Monk Lewis to Sir Walter Scott:—

London, January 24, 1799.

I must not omit telling you, for your own comfort, and that of all such persons as are *wicked* enough to use bad rhymes, that Mr. Smythe, a very clever man at Cambridge, took great pains the other day to convince me not merely that a bad rhyme might pass, but that occasionally a bad rhyme was better than a good one!!! I need not tell you that he left me as great an infidel on this subject as he found me.—  
Ever yours, M. G. LEWIS.

But for this Monk Lewis and the critics, Walter Scott, as is well known, did not object to an imperfect rhyme himself. Yet are there critics to this hour who form their opinion of a poet mainly on the smoothness of his rhymes, and venture to point out a so-called careless rhyme as a blemish, even to a long poem! As if a writer might not decide for himself the degree of clink he chose, and sick of trite jingles, attempt a slight variation. It is, perhaps, owing to the public opinion created by small pedants of this kind that no modifications of rhyme have ever been in received use among us; deviations not cried down would have become precedents, but rule was set above reason.

Rhyme consisting in the concurrence of sounds final, where the words end on a vowel—as die, defy—nothing is needed but the agreement of those vowels; where it ends on a consonant these also must rhyme—in this case twice the amount of rhymed material is required to produce the same effect. The vowel ending being comparatively rare, unison of vowel and consonant both generally go to make up an ordinary rhymed ending. What is called a bad or imperfect rhyme is a failure in either one of these particulars.

Rhyme of the vowel only, or, as it is also called, *assonance*,

though quite neglected in English, is in Spanish not only common, but national and universal: for rhyme of the consonant only we must go to the Norse or Welsh. We have seen it gravely stated that the ears of people of this country are not sufficiently refined to appreciate the subtleties of either style; they must have rhyme full and vulgar, to suit their coarse apprehensions. But a far more elaborate trial than has ever been accorded could alone warrant such a sweeping statement. Take the following attempt, where the agreement is of a slenderer kind again, amounting occasionally to mere echo:—

Once upon the shore of Friesland, in the time of olden gone,  
 Lived a gentle-hearted maiden, more than lovely, named Gudrune.  
 Ah, so fair of form surpassing, winsome so in all her ways;  
 Sunshine seemed to be about her, joy to follow in her path:  
 Magically in her presence fled the sorrows of the sad;  
 No less wondrously enchanted, tamed was roughness of the rude.  
 Early by her fame attracted, noble suitors round her came,  
 But the king, her father, Hetel, ruler of the Hegelings,  
 And the queen, her mother, Hilda, overweening in their pride,  
 Scornfully sent from the castle all who sought the maid to wife.  
 Little did foresee King Hetel, when he them so proudly used,  
 All the bloody ruth he earned him, all the lengthening train of woes.  
 Troth he deemed might he be haughty, ruling over eighty towns,  
 With his strong embattled castles, with his fair and fruitful lands.  
 Well aware in them moreover, those were ready at his call,  
 Who his foemen rage their utmost, right were able to repel.  
 Rulers of his land beneath him, were not five—those barons great,  
 Horand, Irolt, Frut, and Morung, and the Earl of Sturmland Wat,  
 Each of them a warrior chosen, each of them a kinsman true,  
 Faithful to him, firm friends bounden, tried and found in danger so.

The advantage of this style is that the degree of rhyme is perfectly under control at the writer's election, at times approaching full rhyme, at others amounting to nothing more than an avoidance of dissonance.

When the vowel is long, assonance seems sufficient, however different the consonant; but where it is short, some slight affinity of consonants is better, as p, b, f, v—d, t, th—k, j, g—l, r, w—z, s, th—m, n, ng, nd—&c. When the ending is on a vowel, which is then of course long, any



diphthong of that vowel is near enough approach, or even as 'so' and 'true' above.

The thing to be observed is, that the lines of a couplet have a greater affinity with one another than with following or preceding lines; and the thing to be avoided is, that line after line any affinity whatever should appear the effect of design.

Interior rhyming, full or partial, and a certain degree of alliteration, may be carried on in conjunction with this echoing, more advantageously perhaps than in any other style; indeed, as close an approach to numerosity may be as effectually made here as the language admits, not that the above is a pattern in this respect.

It is the peculiarity of all species of under-rhyme that they may exist unseen—unseen, but far from unfelt—merged into the general melody.

And hamlets brown, and *dim* discovered spires,  
And hears their *simple* bell, and marks o'er *All*  
The *dewy* fingers *draw*,  
The *gradual* dusky veil.

Of assonance in unison with rhyme, take the following example from Marsh's 'Manual of the English Language':—

Then out sprang the warrior's blade,  
And *gaily* he waved  
The *flashing* sword.  
Let us meet the foeman, he *cried*,  
Let us *ride* and decide  
The *award*.

In the same work we meet with the following, where, besides alliteration after the Anglo-Saxon pattern, there is in the first member between its two extremes a consonant rhyme, in the second member a full rhyme, the whole an imitation of Icelandic heroic verse after the most approved pattern:—

*Softly* now are *sifting* *snows* on landscape frozen,  
*Thickly* fall the *flake*lets *feathery* light together;  
*Shower* of silver *pouring* *soundless* all around us,  
*Field* and river *folding* *fair* in mantle rarest.

Clad in garments cloud-wrought covered light above her,  
 Calm in cooling slumbers cradled, Earth hath laid her ;  
 So to rest in silence, safe from heats that chafe her,  
 Till her troubled pulses truer beat and fewer.

Every throb is over, all to stillness fallen !  
 Flowers upon her forehead fling not yet, oh springtime !  
 Still yet stay awhile too, summertime, thy coming !  
 Linger yet still longer, lest we break her resting.

The Welsh are the ones for metres of this description, which they carry out much more comprehensively, sometimes every consonant in a verse being, without exception, responded to in the next ; but it is a question whether the necessary formality of all melody by rule is not too prominent a feature to be altogether agreeable.

In Lord Lytton's 'Harold' we have a modern imitation of an old alliterative Saxon lay, entitled 'The Phoenix.' Its author presents it in the short form, divided where the mid-capitals indicate—oddly occasionally :—

Shineth far hence, so Sing the wise elders,  
 Far to the fire-cast The fairest of lands.  
 Daintily dight is that Dearest of joy-fields ;  
 Breezes all balm y-filled Glide through its groves.

There to the blest, ope The high doors of heaven,  
 Sweetly sweep earthward Their wavelets of song ;  
 Frost robes the sward not, Rushes no hailsteel ;  
 Wind-cloud ne'er wanders, Ne'er falleth the rain.

Here it may be observed that the 'odd syllable over,' met with if the verse be read in the forward run, need by no means be of the slight unsubstantial nature spoken as proper to it in blank verse, and elsewhere.

In modern English verse alliteration only plays the subordinate part of a modulant, not to be unduly decried where not overdone.

I might have said,  
 My mountain maid,  
 Come live with me, your own true lover :  
 I know a spot,  
 A silent cot,  
 Your friends will ne'er discover,

Where gently flows the waveless tide  
 By one small garden only,  
 Where the heron waves his wing so wide,  
 And the linnet sings so lonely.—GILLE MACREE.

As used by Gray in his ode of 'The Bard,' quoted elsewhere, it strikingly imparts vigour and melody.

*Ruin* seize thee, ruthless king—  
*Helm* nor *hauberk's* twisted mail—  
 From *Cambria's* curse, from *Cambria's* tears—  
 To *highborn Hoel's* harp or soft *Llewellyn's* lay.

In the following, although perhaps not ill-applied, we view it coldly. The explanation, if we are not mistaken, is that blank verse has not sufficient swing and emphasis about it to give the alliteration due effect, making it seem to fall flat accordingly:—

Then a piteous cry,  
 And from the purple baldachin down sprang  
 The princess gleaming like a ghost, and slid  
 Among the swords, and standing in the midst  
 Swept a wild arm of prohibition forth.  
 And in the hush her voice heavy with scorn:  
 Or shall I call you men or beasts? who seem  
 No nobler than the bloodhound and the wolf,  
 Which scorn to prey upon their proper kind!  
 Christians I will not call you who defraud  
 That much-misapprehended holy name,  
 Of reverence due by such a deed as done,  
 Will clash against the charities of Christ  
 And make a marred thing and a mockery  
 Of the fair face of mercy.

It is the custom, now-a-days, to sneer at every form of alliteration, and yet accept rhyme; but obviously this is absurd, for if alliteration differs in anything from the other constituents of melody, it is in being too decided, forcing itself upon the notice, and so becoming vulgar, which as said is in fully as great degree the fault of its rival.

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## XVII.

## JUNCTIONS.

It has been remarked that many verses may be written in half or whole lengths at pleasure. When, however, either member has adopted the latitude allowable at the beginning and end of verses in ordinary, it is obvious the two members in junction will wear a very different metrical aspect, either to the single portions or to the line conjoined without variations.

In the following tripping metre, the first member lacking a syllable, the measure is broken, and two accents come together :—

Broad the forests stood, I read, on the hills of Linteged.  
 And three hundred years had stood mute adown each hoary wood,  
     Like a full heart having prayed.  
 And the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,  
 And but little thought was theirs of the silent antique years,  
     In the building of their nest.  
 Down the sun dropt large and red on the towers of Linteged—  
 Lance and spear upon the height, bristling strange in fiery light,  
     While the castle stood in shade.—MRS. BROWNING.

So, again, with the exception of the first line :—

Hollow is the oak beside the sunny waters drooping ;  
 Thither came, when I was young, happy children trooping ;  
 Dream I now, or hear I now—far, their mellow whooping ?  
 Gay below the cowslip bank, see the billow dances ;  
 There I lay beguiling time, when I lived romances,  
 Dropping pebbles in the wave, fancies into fancies.

BULWER LYTTON.

Curtness of the first member, indeed, necessitates irregular junction, for if the loss be attempted to be made up afterwards—that is, the second member begin with an unaccented syllable—instead of the tripping measure being kept up unbroken, it simply lapses into the forward run. Of this the first line above is an example.



In the irregular junction of verse in the forward run, instead of a syllable omitted the question is of one added.

He is gone on the mountain, he is lost to the forest,  
Like a summer-dried fountain, when our need was the sorest;  
The fount reappearing from the raindrops shall borrow,  
But to us comes no cheering, to Duncan no morrow.—SCOTT.

And the ships that came from England, when the winter months were gone,  
Brought no tidings of this vessel, nor of Master Lamberton;  
This put the people to praying that the Lord would let them hear,  
What in his greater wisdom he had done with friends so dear,  
And at last their prayers were answered—it was in the month of June,  
An hour before the sunset of a windy afternoon.—LONGFELLOW.

It is seen the verse thus arranged takes a sort of leap at the cesural position, unlike anything we have observed before.

In the next, which is somewhat peculiar, every line is divided by a central cesura of free junction :—

Rests my cheek upon my hand, rests my elbow on the table,  
Like a man who would in earnest compel himself to muse;  
But my thoughts are in revolt from a will become unable  
To consolidate in order the freedom they abuse.

Still I seek, I yearn, I pray, to fasten firm decision,  
To the choice that must determine the lot of waning life;  
What is best for me seems clear through all shadow to my vision,  
The Sabbath day of quiet, after working days of strife.

Ah! to watch on lawns remote, in the deep of Sabine valleys,  
How the sunset gilds the cypress growing high beside my home,  
While the ringdove's latest coo lulls the fading forest alleys,  
Were sweeter for life's evening than the roar and smoke of Rome.

BULWER LYTTON.

Here, immediately preceding the cesura, are in every case two march feet, the former of the two frequently a hover. Preceding this again a quantum of either two or three syllables, generally the latter, which follow the attraction of the other feet in inclining to the forward run. Some lines wear the aspect of trip throughout; but as they can incline the other way, they do.

Simple change from march into trip is feasible enough, though quite ignored in modern poetry.

The king was in his counting-house Counting out his money,  
The queen was in the parlour Eating bread and honey,  
The maid was in the garden Hanging out the clothes,  
Along came a blackbird and Snapped off her nose.

Sweet came the hallow chiming Of the Sabbath bell,  
Borne on the morning breezes Down the woody dell.  
On a bed of pain and anguish Lay dear Annie Lisle;  
Changed were the lovely features, Gone the happy smile.

Writing the two lines in one after this fashion, it would be positively open to consider the last member forward or backward, the determination resting on the degree of force given to the cesura.

Though not junctions of the cesural kind, it may be as well to include in this section all changes from one run to the other. The following begin in tripping measure, and then change to march, so that there are two unaccented syllables between accents at a certain point, imparting a lively effect. The arrangement is, indeed, no other than that characterised as the strong beginning carried more into the body of the verse:—

To and fro on the waters swaying  
Over the pitiless ocean grave,  
Just as lissofly lightly playing  
With the still as the stormy wave.

Serious worth in its airy gladness,  
Sports the Buoy to its anchor true:  
Faithless heart, wilt thou sink in sadness?  
Rise to tell of an anchor too.—BULWER LYTTON.

O you chorus of indolent reviewers,  
Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,  
Look, I come to the touch a tiny poem,  
All composed in a metre of Catullus;  
All in quantity careful of my motion,  
Like a skater on ice that hardly bears him,  
Lest I fall unawares before the people,  
Waking laughter in indolent reviewers:  
Should I flounder awhile without a tumble,  
Thro' this metrification of Catullus,  
They should speak to me not without a welcome.—TENNYSON.

In expression this last does not dis-resemble the sonnet; it is, therefore, recommended to sonneteers in general as a variation.

Another variety:—

Loud-voiced night, with the wild winds blowing  
     Many a tune;  
 Stormy night, with white rainclouds going  
     Over the moon;  
 Mystic night, that each minute changes—  
 Now as blue as the mountain ranges  
     Far, far away;  
 Now, as black as a heart where strange is  
     Joy, night or day.—BULWER LYTTON.

Again, with the arrangement only partial:—

Sweet in the greenwood a birdie sings,  
 Golden-yellow its two bright wings,  
 Red its heartikin, blue its crest:  
 Oh but it sings with the sweetest breast.

Early, early at lighted dawn,  
 On the edge of my ingle-stone,  
 As I prayed my morning prayer—  
 ‘Tell me thy errand, birdie fair.’—TOM TAYLOR.

Rich and rare were the gems she wore,  
 And a bright gold ring on her wand she bore;  
 But oh! her beauty was far beyond  
 Her sparkling gems and snow-white wand.

Lady, dost thou not fear to stray,  
 So lone and lovely through this bleak way?  
 Are Erin’s sons so good or so cold  
 As not to be tempted by woman or gold?—MOORE.

Pain and sorrow shall vanish before us,  
 Youth may wither, but feeling will last:  
 All the shadow that ever fell o’er us,  
     Love’s light summercloud sweetly shall cast.  
     Oh! if to love thee more  
     Each hour I numbered o’er:  
     If this a passion be  
     Worthy of thee,

Then, be happy, for thus I adore thee ;  
 Charms may wither, but feeling will last :  
 All the shadow that e'er shall fall o'er thee  
 Love's light summercloud sweetly shall cast.—MOORE.

Contrary change out of the forward metre into the tripping is impracticable without intervention of the fixed cesura.

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## XVIII.

## TONE-VERSE.

AKIN to the last subject may be cited another kind of irregularity. We have seen that it is allowable to quicken the movement of verse by the insertion of additional syllables, even to racing speed. Let only the contrary course be attempted, on however small a scale, the verse is contemptuously styled halting ; this harsh judgment should at least be reconsidered. Is there any will say the close of this old ditty would be better corrected,

Even so a man, whose thread is spun,  
 Drawn out and set, and so is done.  
 The rose withers, the blossom blasteth,  
 The flower fades, the morning hasteth :  
 The sun *sets*, the shadow flies,  
 The gourd consumes, and man he dies.

The correction is indeed simple enough : write *he* or *it* in front of the word 'sets,' as it is done before 'dies' in the following line. But where is the gain? Certainly not in the expression, only in conforming to rule for rule's sake.

Let us take another instance :—

Old Holly, well we know thy *kind face* of old ;  
 Thy glossy leaves, thy ruddy berries and prickles bold.  
 Of winters braved thy *look speaks*, sturdy and true,  
 And of the heart behind it stout that bore thee through.  
 Thy hand, old friend, ah well I know how strong thy grasp,  
 But not I wot a *friend's hand* gives half a clasp.  
 Thy hand then, Holly, but thy prickles—oh !  
 Here's to thee, Holly, and fair Mistletoe.



'Twas in the time of olden, time *agone lang syne*,  
 That thou, old sturdy Holly, madest Mistletoe thine.  
 Still ever against that tide thou deckest thee in thy brightest,  
 Likewise thy ladie fair she decks her in her whitest.

This lets us into the metrical mystery, for it is at once apparent that something more than ordinary is required before a syllable can be dropped. This is excessive weight in the component words, monosyllables, which form a sort of spondaic foot between them across the gap. In the second stave there is once a concurrence of three such syllables, and then no further employment of the figure, such of course not being compulsory; nor, happening at the end of the line, is there any metric break in this last instance.

The verse, 'How should we sing the *Lord's song* in a *strange land*,' might be quoted as a notable instance, having this dwell repeated twice in a very brief space.

Holding that there is no further observance called for in verse than that of pleasing proportion, it cannot be admitted that these or similar forms are unlawfully constituted, unless disagreeable.

Take the following sequent to a piece instanced before, under false metre:—

Do you question the young children in the sorrow,  
 Why their tears are falling so?  
 The *old man* may weep for his to-morrow,  
 Which is lost in long Ago.  
 The *old tree* is leafless in the forest.  
 The *old year* is ending in the frost,  
 The *old wound* if stricken is the sorest,  
 The *old hope* is hardest to be lost:  
 But the young, young children, O my brothers,  
 Do you ask them why they stand  
 Weeping sore before the bosom of their mothers,  
 In our happy Fatherland?—MRS. BROWNING.

Lines of this description are not unfrequently met with:—

There came a voice when all forsaken  
 This *heart long* had sleeping lain,  
 Nor thought its cold pulse would ever waken  
 To such benign, blessèd sounds again.

Sweet voice of comfort 'twas like the stealing  
 Of summer wind through some wreathed shell.  
 Each secret winding, each inmost feeling  
 Of all my soul echoed to its spell.  
 'Twas whispered balm, 'twas sunshine spoken,  
 I'd *live years* of grief and pain  
 To have my long sleep of sorrow broken  
 By such benign, blessed sounds again.—MOORE.

The admired cadence of 'Love's Young Dream' owes its character to this sort of spondaic resting on long syllables, as also does 'Auld Lang Syne.' With these, however, the number of syllables is three, and there is no metric break. But then the end of the line is the place of the dwell, and that accounts for the rest. The close requires the third long syllable, and that brings matters metrically straight:—

Oh! the days are gone when Beauty bright  
 My *heart's chain* wove,  
 When my dream of life from morn till night  
 Was *love, still love*.  
 New hope may bloom,  
 New days may come  
 Of milder, calmer beam,  
 But there's nothing half so sweet in life  
 As *love's young dream*:  
 No, there's nothing half so sweet in life  
 As *love's young dream*.—MOORE.

A question may arise as to whether decided pauses ought not to reckon for something in verse, as well as rests in music. No observance of the kind is requisite, but the cesural position has been occasionally made use of to dock the verse a syllable, after the manner of the first example cited:—

Orphan hours, the year is dead,  
 Come and *sigh*, come and weep!  
 Merry hours, smile instead,  
 For the year is but asleep:  
 See it smiles as it is sleeping,  
 Mocking your untimely weeping.—SHELLEY.

Instances of the contrary might just as easily be adduced where the cesura has been taken advantage of to increase syllables indefinitely.

Hyperion to a satyr: so loving to my mother.  
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid.

Set against these

A brother's murder—Pray can I not.

Conformity in these is less sought, but is really hardly more taxed than in this of strained regularity from Dekker, where a long string of articles, more numerous than the feet, is crammed into one verse:—

Six gifts I spend upon mortality,  
Wisdom, strength, health, beauty, long life, and riches;  
Out of my bounty one of these is thine.

No metre but blank verse could submit to this treatment without breaking down utterly.

A treatise on versification can hardly be considered complete that leaves out of notice altogether about suiting the sound to the sense; but really it is a point on which rules are useless. If the writer's own perception of appropriateness cannot guide him, nothing else can. All know the passage:—

Soft is the strain when zephyr gently blows,  
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;  
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,  
The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar:  
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,  
The line too labours, and the verse moves slow:  
Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,  
Flies o'er the unbending corn, and skims along the main.

Of course, in the very nature of things, there is nothing here that can compare with the variable numbers of 'Alexander's Feast,' or Pope's own 'Ode on St. Cecilia's Day.' Variable movement of that kind there is none. The point of import is that in the first couplet the sound of the words employed is notably soft and smooth—few rough *r*'s; in the second couplet, the direct contrary, many rough *r*'s; in a word, a deft use of alliteration.

The last two couplets are noticeable on somewhat different ground: the first by the weight attempted to be thrown into

the words ; the second, by the lightness. Any difference between the acts of Ajax and Camilla rests on the use of weightier words in general for the former, but of such in the unaccented places, that is, on the words 'vast,' 'too,' 'moves;' while the protraction of the last line of the piece, under opposite conditions, expresses ease like undrooping flight.

It may, however, be observed of the line that supposably 'labours,' that the quasi-hover that the word 'and' in accental position allows imparts a metrical tendency quite opposite to tardy, unless overborne in utterance by a reflected weight from the known sense.

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## XIX.

### CESURAL VERSE.

It was observed that every single metrical element was at times dropped, at others brought into prominent notice. We have had verses without cesura ; we shall now have them of cesura only, dropping out of sight the foot altogether for a time, or making it quite secondary.

The cadence accompanying fixed cesura has already been commented on ; we shall now see that this has the power of constituting verses to itself alone, with a certain kind of parallel bearing.

The peculiar style in which Macpherson edited his 'Poems of Ossian' is well known to every one, short disjointed sentences, varying between three and four feet about, but of no certain measure. Macpherson, with great propriety, scorned to reduce his poems to the crabbed forms of ordinary verse, and appears to have hesitated whether his work was not a kind of verse already. What, it may safely be asserted, he did not perceive was, how near an approximation to verse he



actually had attained, though yet beyond the barrier. Little more was needed than that two of his short sentences should have been written in one, and verse would have been constituted forthwith. The present writer is preparing an edition of Ossian thus ordered, of course with extensive modifications in general.

But why art thou sad, son of Fingal, why grows the cloud of thy soul?  
The chiefs of other days have departed, they have gone without their  
fame.

The sons of future years shall pass away; another race shall arise.  
The people are like the waves of ocean, like the leaves of woody  
Morven;

They pass away in the rustling blast, and other leaves lift their green  
heads on high.

Did thy beauty last, O Ryno; stood the strength of carborne Oscar?  
Fingal himself departed, the halls of his fathers forgot his steps.  
Shalt thou then remain, thou aged bard, when the mighty have failed?  
No, but my fame shall remain, and grow as the oak of Morven,  
Which lifts its broad head to the storm, and rejoices in the course of the  
wind.

The approach to feet is seen to be very close here, but so it is in the famous 'Poems' throughout; indeed, almost any English sentence of this length, of not too hard words, will naturally divide up in this way into feet approximate.

Even in so irregular a measure as this it is as well to keep tolerably close to one length of line; in the verse before us, not having fewer syllables than enough to make three feet in each member, not more on the average than to make four, or at most five. The second member will always bear protraction better than the first.

The darkness whistles there; the distant mariner sees the waving  
trees—  
Her soul trembles at the blast, she turns her ear towards the tread of  
her feet.

A triplet arrangement, or at least a sufficient displacement of the central cesura to wear that appearance, may perhaps

not be wholly inadmissible, but still should be very seldom allowed.

He took the bow ; the tears flow down from both his sparkling eyes.

Too equal and decided a division into three is objectionable :—

Silent he stands, for who had not heard of the battles of Gaul.

The same constitution can be applied to verses of much greater length, in which case the approach to foot-ordering is much less perceptible.

#### THE FLOWER GIRL OF SICYON.

O fair, very fair and glorious is the broad world ; and all full of sunlight  
is the blinding and infinite blue.

Earth and heaven are beautiful in their perfect peace ; but my soul  
within me is all a turbulent sea of love.

O my love ! I behold you everywhere by night and by day ;

In my dreams you are with me through the darkness, and when I awake  
you abide still in my heart.

Never a thing I do but I do it for you who cannot see me, never a word  
I speak but I do it for you who hear me not.

O me ! love is very sweet and sorrowful, but the pulses of the great  
earth beat continually to the music of love !

Is there anything stronger and mightier than love, that overcometh  
alike gods and men !

Answer me, ye beautiful flowers of the forest, ye amorous trees that  
overhead tenderly embrace one another !

Alas, I behold you happy in perfect possession ; but my soul, my soul, is  
all a turbulent sea of love.—MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE (XV.).

The line here beginning 'O my love' is seen to stand apart, without a parallel. Shall it be regarded as forming a triplet with the next pair, or independent? Best the latter, perhaps, considering its length and self-completeness.

If there may be both single line and triplet, and yet the strong cesura that constitutes the parallel couplet the only atom of rule about the matter, it may well be inquired, is it worth while to chart such floating islands? But it is seen the exceptions are but like spondaic endings in the hexameter,

like an occasional quick-foot in blank verse, or any other small anomaly most metres present, and that the islands are really anchored after all.

The name proposed for verse of this cesural construction is the *midabout*, as the most descriptive of its character.

In arranging measures of this kind, when too long to get into one line, it seems advisable not to divide them in writing just at the cesura, such a practice tending to disintegrate the structure, and destroy the parallelism.

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## XX.

### FREE VERSE.

THAT will be called free verse which is freed from control in the length of its lines, for division into lines appears to be the prime principle of metre. First, with feet and rhyme still preserved :—

For all the many years  
 I might have seen peace upon Israel  
 Beside my father, in the citadel  
 Of Gilead, where in loneliness,  
 With neither son nor daughter, comfortless,  
 When I am gone he will be judging still.  
 One little week of tears,  
 And we have wept our fill.  
 Yes, I shall go away and have not seen  
 My children, or that child who might have been.  
 And yet I cannot weep—  
 Cannot weep any more. I only wish to sleep  
 Here, in this flowery dell,  
 Where the soft waters well  
 To soothe me with a murmur low and sweet.—G. SIMCOX.

Or the same in quick metre :—

Now shall we say  
 Our Italy lives indeed !

And if it were not for the beat and bray  
 Of drum and trump of martial men,  
 Should we feel the underground heave and strain,  
 Where heroes left their dust as a seed  
 Sure to emerge one day?  
 And if it were not for the rhythmic march  
 Of France and Piedmont's double hosts,  
 Should we hear the ghosts  
 Shrill through ruined aisle and arch,  
 Throb along the frescoed wall,  
 Whisper an oath by that divine,  
 They left in picture and stone,  
 That Italy is not dead at all?  
 And if it were not for the tears in our eyes,  
 These tears of a sudden and passionate joy,  
 Should we see her arise?—MRS. BROWNING.

Short staves of settled form in their recurrence, but as irregular as pieces of this free verse, are in occasional use, as this of the end of the sixteenth century:—

Send home my long strayed eyes to me,  
 Which oh! too long have dwelt on thee;  
 But if they there have learned such ill,  
 Such forced fashions  
 And false passions,  
 That they be  
 Made by thee  
 Fit for no good sight, keep them still.—J. DONNE.

Or again, in our own day:—

Into the Silent Land,  
 Ah, who shall lead us thither?  
 Clouds in the evening sky more darkly gather,  
 And shattered wrecks lie thicker on the strand.  
 Who leads us with a gentle hand  
 Thither, O thither,  
 Into the Silent Land?—LONGFELLOW.

The following, from Walter Scott's 'Betrothed,' but for lack of foot formation, is a longer form of that class of recurrent stave instanced at the end of the section on Unrhymed Stanza:—



I asked of my harp, 'Who hath injured thy chords?'  
 And she replied, 'The crooked finger, which I mocked in my time.'  
 A blade of silver may be bended, a blade of steel abideth.  
 Kindness fadeth away, but vengeance endureth.

The sweet taste of mead passeth from the lips,  
 But they are long corroded by the juice of the wormwood;  
 The lamb is brought to the shambles, but the wolf rangeth the  
 mountain;  
 Kindness fadeth away, but vengeance endureth.

I asked the red-hot iron when it glimmered on the anvil,  
 'Wherefore glowest thou longer than the firebrand?'  
 'I was born in the dark mine, and the brand in the pleasant greenwood.'  
 Kindness fadeth away, but vengeance endureth.

If free verse imply the poetical note struck without any formal regulation whatever, then have we got it in the following, Scott's 'Song of the Tempest,' in the 'Pirate;' but some restraint, much or little, appears necessary for metre, and that not to be verse without any. It may be a question whether the climaxing form of invocation in the piece count for anything:—

## I.

Stern eagle of the far north-west,  
 Thou that bearest in thy glance the thunderbolt,  
 Thou whose rushing pinions stir ocean to madness,  
 Thou the destroyer of herds, thou the scatterer of navies,  
 Amidst the scream of thy rage,  
 Amidst the rushing of thy onward wings,  
 Though thy scream be loud as the cry of a perishing nation,  
 Though the rushing of thy wings be like the roar of a thousand waves,  
 Yet hear, in thine ire and thy haste,  
 Hear thou the voice of the Reimkennar.

## II.

Thou hast met the pine trees of Drontheim,  
 Their dark-green heads lie prostrate beside their uprooted stems;  
 Thou hast met the rider of the ocean,  
 The tall, the strong bark of the fearless rover,  
 And she has struck to thee the topsail  
 That she had not veiled to a royal armada,  
 Thou hast met the tower that bears its crest among the clouds,  
 The battled massive tower of the Jarl of former days,

And the copestone of the turret  
Is lying upon its hospitable hearth ;  
But thou too shalt stoop, proud compeller of clouds,  
When thou hearest the voice of the Reimkennar.

## XXI.

## HOVER.—FEET VERSUS MAIN.

THE nature of the hover has been already explained as affecting blank verse, in which its influence hardly ever ceases, while in quick metre every foot, unless exceptionally having a corresponding accent, no distinctive notice of it was called for. Here, however, is an example :—

Farewell, farewell, I'll dream no more,  
'Tis misery tō be dreaming ;  
Farewell, farewell, and I will be  
At least like thee in seeming.

This is but by the way, our real concern being more with forms into which the hover enters systematically.

In the following, part of a piece given in the last section, it is merely the natural result of triple rhyme :—

One more unfortunāte  
Weary of breath,  
Rashly importunāte,  
Gone to her death !  
Take her up tenderly  
Lift her with care ;  
Fashioned so slenderly,  
Young, and so fair.—T. HOOD.

In the following its application is rather peculiar, and we begin to touch the true ground :—

When woman's eye grows dim,  
And her cheek paleth ;  
When fades the beautiful,  
Then man's love faileth.

He sits not beside her chair,  
 Clasps not her fingers,  
 Entwines not the damp hair  
 That o'er her brow lingers.

He comes but a moment in,  
 Though her eye brightens.  
 Though the hectic flush  
 Feverishly heightens,  
 He stays but a moment near,  
 While that flush fadeth ;  
 Though disappointment's tear  
 Her dim eye shadeth.

This is a piece about which, simple as it looks, there would be likely to be great disagreement as to the manner of scanning. The apparent construction, and doubtless the real one, is three feet of tolerably free choice in the longer line, and two in the shorter. There is, however, a disorganising metric power within. The middle foot of the three in the longer line being frequently quick, and the third foot, which is also the closing one, slow, there is a tendency to increase the force of the middle accent at the expense of the last, as in the analogous case of 'revert,' with which, indeed, it is in close connection—only a matter of the strong beginning different. The line

Though disappointment's tear

is of that description exactly.

When the middle foot is not quick, compensation is as if made by a real hover, as in the line—

When fades the beautiful.

The first line of the poem, be it understood, is an exception here as in many other metres, the verse not assuming a distinct character till fairly under weigh.

The sum of the matter is this, that when recited in ordinary no verse, short or long, but this one, receives more than *two main* accents. We are drawing nigh to other principles of proportioning in which feet get unsettled.

In the next the hover is confined to the last foot but one, regularly every alternate line :—

Thou wilt come no more, gentle Annie,  
Like a flower thy spirit did depart :  
Thou art gone, alas ! like the many  
That have bloomed in the summer of my heart.  
Shall we never more behold thee,  
Never hear thy winning voice again,  
When the spring time comes, gentle Annie,  
When the wild-flowers are scattered o'er the plain ?

Here the prior alternate line is of three feet, a short foot between two long ones. The other is of four feet, beginning, in like manner with the first, quick, the second slow or quick at choice, and the two final slow. Thus roughly the second line bears to the first the appearance of having the final quick foot lengthened out into four syllables.

The consequence of this is that, read in a natural way, the example of the prior line, together with the similar opening of the other as if the same measure was about to be repeated, tends to the production of the hover on the third foot of the longer line, whether the syllable in place be accentually capable or not. Thus either line receives *three main* accents, save only the short line beginning with 'shall,' which receives but two.

A measure previously given in the section styled Junctions, beginning 'Rests my cheek,' and there remarked on as peculiar, is also noticeable in this way. In this case, however, the *main* beats are *four* :—

All the prizes that allured me in the eager days of passion  
Seem to reason (when it pauses not to scorn them, but survey),  
As baubles which for childhood kindly sages stoop to fashion :  
If sages make the plaything, 'tis to smile upon the play.

Or take another instance, the feet random arranged :—

When the sheep are in the fold, and the kye at hame,  
And a' the world to rest are gane,  
The waes o' my heart fa' in showers frae my ee',  
While my gudeman lies sound by me.



Young Jamie lo'ed me weel, and sought me for his bride ;  
 But saving a crown he had nae thing else beside ;  
 To make the crown a pund, young Jamie ga'ed to sea ;  
 And the crown and the pund were baith for me.  
 He hadna' been awa' a week but only twa,  
 When my father brak his arm, and the cow was stoun awa' ;  
 Ma mother she fell sick, and my Jamie at the sea—  
 And auld Robin Gray came a-courtin' me.

It is seen how unequal are the lines in the number of their feet, varying from four to six, with quick occasional ; but, strange to tell, the main accents in every line will be found the same number, namely, four.

Also another old verse unexpectedly manifests the same substructure :—

An óld song máde by an áged old páte  
 Of an óld worshipful géntleman who hád a great estéte,  
 That képt a brave old hóuse at a bouántiful ráte,  
 And an óld porter to relíeve the poór at his gáte ;  
 Like an óld courtier of the quéen's, and the quéen's old cóurtier.

In this case the movement by feet alone is not sufficient to explain all phenomena.

A peculiarity above others is the vastly different length of line that can be assimilated under *four main* ordering, and the extraordinary aptitude that the most varied verses show in adapting themselves to its regimen.

The secret of the matter is, that when measurement by feet is the least undecided by the action of the hover, another force comes into play, which is no other than *timing*, proportionate timing. All these examples, however, except perhaps the last, are on debatable ground, rather showing how verse into which the hover enters may be ruled, than that such is their arrangement incontestible.

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## XXII.

## MAIN.

WE now come to the most novel section of the subject, that where feet are superseded entirely, their place supplied by the accents bounding a rhapsodic dance along at uneven distances, guided only by the expression.

It was before observed that the principle of feet in general, as first supplanting the old alliterative system, is rather to be explained as a device to reduce the powers of the accent to a minimum for the attainment of smoothness than aught else ; as the nearer and more regular accents fall, the less their proportionate force.

This system of comparatively weak accentual power it is proposed to supplement by another, where accent in all its strength as a torrent is master of the occasion. The number of main beats being four in each line, the consequent descriptive term is *four-main*.

Síng unto Jehóvah, for he hath tríumphed glóriously,  
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea ;  
He hath proved himself my strength and my salvation hath my God,  
The God of my fathers, exalt ye high his name.  
Jehovah, Jehovah, is a mighty man of war :  
Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea,  
Egypt and her king the waters he hath poured over them ;  
Overhead of them the waters, as a stone they sank.

Thy right hand, Jehovah, hath shown glorious in power,  
Thy right hand, Jehovah, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.  
Wondrously hast thou overthrown the proud in their uprising,  
Swiftly were they consumed before thee in thy wrath.

With the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together,  
On a heap the floods upon either hand stood up,  
The depths become dry land in the heart of the sea :  
The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake,  
My soul shall delight itself in the abundance of the spoil :  
I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them—  
Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea swallowed them,  
They sank as lead in the surging waters.

Who is like unto thee, O Jehovah, among the Gods?  
 Fearful of name, and wonderful in works.  
 The nations shall hear, they shall no more stand;  
 Sorrow shall take hold upon the inhabitants of Palestina.  
 Then shall the dukes of Edom be stricken with amazement,  
 Trembling shall fall upon the mighty men of Moab;  
 The dwellers of Canaan their souls shall melt away,  
 Dumb-founded at thy deeds, at the greatness of thine arm.  
 But the people of thy redemption thou shalt mightily bring in,  
 Theirs shalt thou make the land of the inheritance of their foes;  
 Where shall thy Sanctuary, thy holy Sanctuary, be established,  
 The seat of thy kingdom from everlasting to everlasting.

And Miriam the prophetess with a timbrel in her hands,  
 She and the women all with timbrels in their hands,  
 Answering took up the song of thanksgiving and of praise:  
 Sing unto Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously,  
 The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

Even with as little alteration as this, anything of the rhapsodic kind falls into this metre. Many of the verses above are identical with the actual Bible forms, the metre ordering itself by its own force.

Of course there is no possible arrangement of words which, by help of the hover, may not be apportioned into some kind of feet, the above example included; but it is affirmed that this is main, and that no other ruling will meet the occasion.

Note a peculiarity that the verse takes upon itself the form of a couplet; very rarely, indeed, that of a triplet. With exception of an occasional opening line before the metre gets under weigh, each verse must have a parallel, or appear lame; we thus get a certain connection between this verse and midabout.

Another reason why four-main must be held distinct from the ordinary metric system is this: on observation, in spite of its length, the verse cannot be said to have the cesura in the ordinary acceptation, except that which at last is so powerful, it forms the lines into couplets. Yet, on the other hand, every main accent may be said to have its attendant pause, and the movement consequently to be made by short cesural sections:—

Sing unto | Jehovah | for he hath triumphed | gloriously,  
The horse | and his rider | hath he thrown | into the sea.

Consider the short cesural member to form an integer like a foot, and four-main is no other than that twice double. The perception of this may lessen surprise should this principle of proportion be found to have been made use of in widely different languages.

The oft-commented parallelism of Hebrew poetry cannot be of very different nature from midabout and main, the parallel of structure further carried out in the thought, so that the members have more or less an equivalence of meaning. The suitability this method displays for rendering the poets of Palestine or exalted discourse, of any sort, is astonishing. The present writer has applied it to the whole of the book of Job.

Again, the old alliterative measure of the Anglo-Saxon must infallibly have developed into this but for the introduction of rhyme, which paved the way to regular feet, a style since upheld to the exclusion of all other, by over-sedulous regard for the classics.

The four following lines, and others similar, owe all the admiration they have gained to the like cesural structure:—

Warns | in the sun, || refreshes | in the breeze,  
Glows | in the stars, || and blossoms | in the trees,  
Lives | through all life, || extends | through all extent,  
Spreads | undivided, || operates | unspent.

An evident affinity in structure may be remarked between main, the alliterative, and interior rhyme formations, all adopting the same sort of twice double arrangement, following the road traced for them by the rhythmic force, which works thus in cesural divisions.

It was with four-main in mind that further notice was not taken at the time of how the hover might be used to diversify verses in march-metre of greater length than five feet. But suppose we construct a verse of six feet, the accents occurring in their places but for the hover, if the note be stirring the



verse rises into main at once, and nothing is gained by keeping it to nominal feet only hampering its variability:—

Loud as a trumpet clang in rapturous appeal  
Sounded the voice of the Fardarter from his throne.

The foot structure has only a chance when the tone is any way subdued, instancing the inferiority of foot to main:—

Borne on the melancholy streaming of the wind  
A note which fell with dying softness on the ear.

These two samples are identical in structure, though certainly few would suppose it.

Perhaps the strangest feature of the whole is that the same verse will often appear unobjectionable as main:—

Wóndrously | hast thou overthrówn | the próud | in theír uprising.

But weak if reckoned by metric feet:—

Wóndrous|ly hást | thou ó|verthrówn | the próud | in their | uprís|ing.

Can any argument be founded on this, it is that foot measurement bears too hard, is unjust to the powers of the language. Indeed the writer of main will find it, in a great measure, necessary to avoid falling into a regular foot formation, as productive of results too smoothly weak to stand.

It was seen how little change was required to adopt the song of Moses to this metre; as little would be required for the Psalms or any other portion of Hebrew poetry. But it should be borne in mind that the Psalms, as they at present stand, are actually in a kind of verse already.

What is the following but the kind of Ossianic free-song referred to before:—

When God heard this he was wroth and took sore displeasure at Israel,  
So that he forsook the tabernacle in Silo; even the tent that he had  
pitched among men.

He delivered their power into captivity, and their beauty into the enemy's  
hand.

He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his  
inheritance.

The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given in marriage.

Their priests were slain with the sword; and there were no widows to make lamentation.—Ps. lxxviii. 60.

Or the following, unchanged save for mere points of rendering not affecting the metre, what is it but main in lines of varying length?—

By the wáters of Bábylon we sát down and wépt,  
 Whén we remémbered thée, O Zíon.  
 Ás for our hárps we hángèd them úp  
     Upón the wíllow-branches bý.  
 When théy who led us cáptive requíred of us a sóng  
     And mélody in our héáviness:  
 Síng us one of the sóns of Zíon.  
 Hów should we síng the Lórd's song in a stránge land!  
     Íf I forgét thee, O Jerúsalem,  
 Máy my right hánd forgét her cúnning.  
     Jerúsalem, of thée unmíndful  
 Let my tóngue cleáve to the roóf of my móuth.  
 Remémber the children of Édom, O Lórd,  
     That dáy of thy Cíty how they cried,  
 Dówn with it, dówn with it, éven to the gróund!  
 Thóu too, O daúghter of Bábylon perdítioned,  
 Háppy he who sérveth thee éven as thou hast ús:  
 A bléssing on hím who táketh thy children,  
     And dásheth them agáinst the stónes.—Ps. cxxxvii.

Whether this kind of arrangement be open here to the charge of not being distinct enough in ordering of the lines, like that quoted from Shelley's 'Queen Mab,' is another question. The slight stricture there passed does not, however, seem to apply in this instance, but the untrammelled cadencing of the great rhythmic force to determine the point sufficiently.

A strain like the above when unadorned is adorned the most, infinitely preferable to any of the clinking ballads made upon it, be they by whom they may. Even Byron's genius here, perforce, encountered a rebuff.

To point still further the connection between verse and prose, note how Wilkie Collins, in his tale of 'Armada,'

makes use, most likely unconsciously, of this most regular stanza in main rhythm :—

The solitude that had been soothing, the silence that seemed like an enchantment on the other broad in the day's vigorous prime, was a solitude that saddened here, a silence that struck cold in the stillness and melancholy of the day's decline.

This passage must have struck many, doubly conspicuous as it is by a near approach to a rhymed close. It is the elevation of his subject that has lifted the writer to verse, for the story actually culminates at that passage, and from that point declines in every element of interest. The piece may be variously arranged in lines to wear more the aspect of verse, but its thorough proportionate structure appears the more marked the longer it is observed.

Looking into the structure that main assumes, it appears that very little curbing would be required to reduce any particular line of it to the regulations of ordinary metre. But what would be gained by so doing? A specious regularity, and that is all, which, to impose to the abolition of freedom, would be totally unwarranted. Understand, those who confine themselves to feet will have to look to syllables, while the rhythmic rhapsodist need only regard his words, a difference greater than perhaps many at first imagine. Finally, main is the easiest and most powerful metre in the language, and with its invention, the shackles that have for ever restrained the highest flights of the poet may be said to have been knocked away; especially let the improvisatore's heart rejoice, for this is the metre for him.

If five-main be attempted, the line, as used in four, will not readily receive any accession to its length; so room for the additional accent must be found within, consequently lowering the effect of those in previous possession. The result is a degradation into a nondescript perhaps not unsuitable for comedy.

Good that your lawful wedded wife should have that to do;  
 Deuce a bit deserves such a wicked old wretch as you are.  
 That one of my virtuous precocity should be so treated.  
 O if I had my choice again wouldn't I have a pious man,  
 One with scripture on his lips and a bible always in his pocket.

The tendency appears to be still to four-main, but with strong accents secondary, which serve to neutralise its power and bring it to something of an irregular foot-structure.

The field that main offers to take up is most wide, a guide over what has hitherto been regarded, for poetical purposes, a profitless and trackless waste.

## XXIII.

## ON THE RENDERING OF GREEK METRE.

THE limits of metric possibilities in English are now nearly traced, nothing more but the question of regular prosody remaining.

In English, if a vowel is long, the accent seems to dwell on it, as in *nóte* ; if short, it seems to pass it over and strike more on the following consonant, as in *not'* ; but this has no connection whatever with the importance of the words metrically, nor is the accentual stress less on one than on the other. Thus the length or shortness of a vowel has no connection with the beat, or with the emphatic importance of the word or syllable.

Where there is no accent the vowels are as incommensurate as can well be, but in prosody, such as are followed by two consonants or more are held long by position ; others, as a rule, short. Did not custom blind the sense, surely the absurdity of such a distinction would strike every one. The purpose of prosody, where native, was to smoothe the way to singing, the ordering of consonants and vowels therefore reasonable, which is more than can be said for English attempts which have no such aim.

Those who would bring prosodial metre into English should first do it in Greek and Latin, for there, to Englishmen, it little more exists as a reality than in their own tongue. It seems to be quite overlooked that our pronunciation of the



classics is altogether accentual, and that the metres of the ancients, as we know them, are altogether our own inventions. In the verses of Homer, as pronounced by a Greek, Englishmen are as much at a loss to recognise the measure as they are the words, the home distortion having been as great in one as in the other.

Those who would have that an accented syllable in English answers to a long one in Latin and Greek have indeed a certain degree of warrant for their assertion; it is the rule they have applied to the dead languages already. In adopting so-called Greek metres they are but endeavouring to reclaim their own misbegotten progeny.

The argument against all quantitative arrangement with us lies in the fact that, while no form of English can be without accent, this beat has such a robust nature that no other measuring quality with which it comes in contact has any chance against it, nor even in competitive union therewith can make itself the least felt. Witness this attempt, a straight mark to indicate length, a curved shortness after the usual method :—

Ō mīgh|tŷ mōuthed | īn||vēntōr ōf | hārmoniēs  
 Ō skilled | tō sing | ōf || time ōr ē|tērniŷ,  
 Gōdgift|ēd ōr|gānvoīce | ōf Ēnglānd,  
 Miltōn ā | nāme tō rē|sōund fōr | āgēs;  
 Whose Titan angels Gabriel, Abdiel,  
 Starred from Jehovah's gorgeous armouries,  
 Tower as the deep-domed empyrean  
 Rings to the roar of an angel onset—  
 Me rather all that bowery loveliness,  
 The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,  
 And bloom profuse and cedar arches,  
 Charm as a wanderer out in ocean  
 Where some refulgent sunset of India  
 Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,  
 And crimson-hued the stately palm woods  
 Whisper in odorous heights of even.—TENNYSON.

The verse is supposed to be meted as indicated, but, to speak sooth, the balance by which the verses of Euripides were comically weighed against those of Æschylus would be

needed to determine, even in this choice example, which were the long syllable and which the short. The verse laughs at such finnickings, and asserts its true division thus:—

O mígh|ty-móúthed | invén|tor of hár|monies.

This imitation of an Alcaic is good, not because it resembles an Alcaic, but because all the requirements of a good piece are satisfied.

A point deserving especial notice is the poet's constant use of long words, accent three back, such as hármonies, etérnity, for the closing place in the long lines. Dactyls are out of the question, but the metric effect is of course the same, whatever appellation it goes under. One exception, and one only, to this long word regimen is found in the second line of the last stanza, the run of which it alters considerably.

Were it not for the effectual relief afforded by the different ending of the shorter pair, the effect of this long-word ending would be intolerable; witness another form of it:—

While about the shore of Mona, these Neronian legionaries  
Broke and burnt the grove and altar of the Druid and Druidess,  
Far in the East Boadicea, standing loftily charioted,  
Mad and maddening all that heard her by her fierce volubility,  
Near by half the tribes of Britain, near the colony Camalodune,  
Yelled and shrieked between her daughters o'er a wild confederacy.  
They that scorn the tribes and call us Britain's barbarous populaces,  
Did they hear me, would they listen, did they pity me supplicating?  
Shall I heed them in their anguish? shall I brook to be supplicated?  
Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!  
Must their ever-ravening eagle's beak and talon annihilate us?  
Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave it gorily quivering.

But doubtless its author only intended this piece as a joke, and would not thank us to suppose it for more than styled a metrical experiment.

Measurement in quantity is then impracticable, and, what is more, any mere metre of accent that resembles prosodial only by the palpable error of the same nominal feet aforesaid is by no means to be trusted as giving an equivalent. Better throw the reins on the neck of Pegasus at once, and trust

that he will find his way home to Parnassus aright by instinct.

Better results may be arrived at by taking estimate of the resources at command of the original poet to be imitated, than by following his metre step by step.

Take now the elegy. Given that the hexameter is known, how could a Latin poet impart an elegiacal tone to his composition? Clearly not, as in English, by altering the succession of feet, for that is a point that does not seem very material in his language.

The efforts of the Latin poet result, as known, in the pentameter alternated with the hexameter. Why the pentameter is what it is, and not other, we will attempt to explain.

It begins as its fellow measure begins, then suddenly at the middle of the third foot halts at a fixed cesura; then begins again hexameter-wise, only always with two dactyls, and again breaks. Wherefore these breaks on the long syllable? In that appears to be the key of the mystery.

Ēt tūā | Lēthē̄|is || āctā dā|būntūr ā|qūis.

The aim is to produce a break in the run of words, which, as said, no mere change of succession in the feet will bring about; an effect which, on the other hand, want of syllabic weight in our tongue will not allow us to reproduce by the same method.

The pentameter then is but a modified hexameter, the two members ending broken. Why both members are thus treated, instead of the first only, and then a regular close, or *vice versâ*, may be for euphony, or symmetry, or what—a slight question apart from the other, that we may let rest. Such explanation as has been offered is not done so on full assurance, for on matters foreign one may be in error.

The English verse that answers to the pentameter is that elsewhere described as crown verse, with the fall cadence in the first member; but owing to its, to a great measure, preserving the same final run, and being of the same length as other crown verses, there is no need for the two forms to

regularly alternate, as in the case of the ancient elegiac, nor indeed to occur in equal number at all.

After these two leading verses, the next Greek metre of importance is the iambic, about which there is no conflict of opinion that march-metre is the fit representative.

The choruses of Greek plays afford more room for pondering. On due consideration main in some phase seems most to recommend itself for these; either in short equal lines of two or three beats, or in some longer and more irregular intermixture, like that of the 'Waters of Babylon' before cited, There is something altogether out of character in using rhyme for the purpose.

How particular forms of stanza may be represented is really not of much moment, for as verse only imports at all as a vehicle of expression, wherever this is right the form cannot be far out.

To take Alcaics now, of which so good an instance has been given early in this section, it is doubtful whether Collins's 'Ode to Evening,' instanced Chap. IX., has not an equal claim to be designated Alcaic likewise. The difference between the two styles really lies little deeper than the use of long or short words for the close of some of the lines already commented on, a moot-point at the writer's election, though the long-word ending may be in itself the more spirited and effective.

Sapphics again in this example, otherwise characterised elsewhere in the same section:—

Swift through the sky the vessel of the Suras  
Sails up the fields of ether like an angel.  
Rich is the freight, O vessel, that thou bearest:  
Beauty and virtue.

Here, beyond that there are three lines wound up by a shorter one, the verses are no nearer to or farther from real Sapphics than any other lines of totally different feet, quick, slow, or what not.

Finally, it is a safer guide to use the best practical expo-



nent of the class of verse the language affords, than to ape imitation closer, which is only delusive.

As to choice of a metre, when doubtful, let the subject choose its own is about the best advice; fitness or unfitness will soon display itself. Till mastery of metrical effects be obtained by knowledge of versification and habit of practice, merely to be handling a capable metre may not much avail; and when this is acquired, a few trials will soon suggest a road, of which, indeed, there may be more than one equally suitable.

In all cases, however, especially if it be an original work that is being written, the preliminary draught, mental or otherwise, must be rigid indeed if the measure employed do not greatly influence its character, as certainly it must its expression.

## XXIV.

### CONCLUSION.

It is reported that the Greeks used to scan the best passages in their orators, and note the succession of feet they had employed; but in English there is no equivalent metrical quality to take note of, the proportionate value of syllables being for the most part indeterminate, nor feet proper existing, save as a nondescript quantum under dictation of the beat. As to remarking all accents, and their distances one from another, it has been shown that a verse deals summarily with those accents that do not fall in with its arrangement; while the differentiation and ordering into less and greater accents, noticed in certain metres, and everywhere apparent in prose, is seen to complicate matters to the extent of rendering all attempts of the kind quite futile.

Presumably, a prose passage might, on occasion, exhibit approach to verse by any and every metrical method there is,

but though the form of the sentence that shall be under consideration be of such a kind as to settle, indisputably, to what metre it could be most easily referred, still the rhythm given to the sentence as soon as it is arranged as verse is not at all the same run or cadential tone which it had of itself naturally, but a something different, more definite and measurable. It would be idle, then, to look for any metrical ordering in prose; we can at most but find the capability for such ordering, nothing more. If, to accents we look, and rule them after march-metre they will be weakened, if after main they will receive force additional.

Besides the differences arising from this cause, there are also others which have their source in cadence, and as this enters more deeply into the structure of metre than any other constituent, so it deserves our most attentive regard.

The rhythmic elevation that seems to attend any poetical description would also appear to be not so much structural in any metrical sense of arrangement of words and sentences as in the reader's natural perception of the elevation, whence a tendency to impart to it a cadence according.

Take the following piece of poetical description from Charlotte Brontë's 'Shirley':—

The gray church and grayer tomb look divine with this crimson gleam on them. Nature is now at her evening prayers; she is kneeling before those red hills. I see her prostrate on the great steps of her altar, praying for a fair light for mariners at sea, for travellers in deserts, for lambs on moors, and unfledged birds in woods. . . . I saw—I now see—a woman Titan, her robe of blue air spreads to the outskirts of the heath, where yonder flock is grazing; a veil, white as an avalanche, sweeps from her head to her feet, and arabesques of lightning flame on its borders. Under her breast I see her zone, purple like that horizon; through its blush shines the star of evening. Her steady eyes I cannot picture: they are clear, they are deep as lakes, they are lifted and full of worship, they tremble with the softness of love and the lustre of prayer. Her forehead has the expanse of a cloud, and is paler than the early moon risen long before dark gathers; she reclines her bosom on the ridge of Stilbro' Moor, her mighty hands are joined beneath it. So kneeling face to face, she speaks with God.

If the cadential tendency be followed up, and the passage

be arranged into midabout sections, as best fits, it will be found, being then verse, that more than four accents are not readily accommodated in any member; either on the main principle the less important or less well situated will be overridden—see verse 7 below; or the number of accents being above cesural limit, will better divide and balance together—see verse 11 below: the choice of which two methods will be often an affair of personal judgment. On the other hand, if the members are inordinately short the natural tendency will be to make the most of every accent possible, imparting a more impressive air, as in verses 5 and 14 below, two blank verses:—

The gray church and grayer tombs look divine with this crimson gleam  
on them.

Nature is now at her evening prayers; she is kneeling before those red  
hills.

I see her prostrate on the great steps of her altar, praying for a fair light  
for mariners at sea,

For travellers in deserts, for lambs on moors, and unfledged birds in  
woods.

I saw—I see her now—a woman Titan:

Her robe of blue air spreads to the outskirts of the heath, where yonder  
flock is grazing;

A veil white as an avalanche sweeps from her head to her feet, and  
arabesques of lightning flame on its borders.

Under her breast I see her zone, purple like that horizon;

Through its blush shines the star of evening. Her steady eyes I cannot  
picture;

They are clear, they are deep as lakes, they are lifted and full of  
worship;

They tremble with the softness of love and the lustre of prayer.

Her forehead has the expanse of a cloud, and is paler than the early  
moon risen long before dark gathers.

She reclines her bosom on the ridge of Stilbro' moor; her mighty  
hands are joined beneath it.

So kneeling face to face, she speaks with God.

On a general view, taking all the unrhymed forms together, they appear to form a sort of scale of gradation, or chain of connection, complete in order and application for poems of any length and character:—

*Trip*, of four feet, without cesura:—lightly descriptive approaching the ballad.

*Blank*, of five feet, shifting cesura:—one kind, the strict solemnly descriptive; the other the differentiated, conversational.

*Crown*, of six feet, with cesura more central:—the true heroic metre.

*Midabout*, feet dubious, cesura central:—of fixed unfixity, monotonous variety, somewhat elegiac.

*Main*, cesura and feet coalescing:—the true rhapsodic, of untold power.

How great an advance this is upon the ordinary count, which halts doubting at the hexameter, and would rule that trip and march-metre are the sole generic forms for an ordinary unrhymed poem that the ‘genius of the English language’ will allow, needs no further setting forth.

And when, again, it is borne in mind that the feet of which these were constructed were supposed to have some occult connection with trochee, iambus, dactyl, &c., under which names they went, as inferior types of the same, unto the blinding of all free and independent regard, with mock-quantitative prosody still pursued by those who should have known better, it is seen, not to mention minor matters, that the light let in was sorely needed.

There are those, and no satire in the case comes up to plain statement, who deliberately set down the line

Fathoms deep in Norman water lies the good ship Alabama

as a hexameter! and, more incredible still, there were newspapers found that could allow correspondents to discuss considerations of the kind. It is indeed time that the schoolmaster was up and about on the subject when such absurdity is possible.

Those, in like case, who doubted whether Tennyson was justified in writing

Long lines of cliff breaking had left a chasm,



instead of 'had breaking left,' also showed their ignorance ; but this instance would be trifling were it not the sort of ground that some critics have heretofore gone upon to bring Shakspeare and others to what they call rule !

Again, was ever discussion so unsatisfactory as that which, first and last, has taken place on the subject of the hexameter ? It is really wonderful so much could have been said about it, and so little arrived at. But all this, it is hoped, is now of the past, and that the veriest child will be henceforth enabled to give judgment on points of this kind in his own language, earlier at least than as to the length and shortness of syllables in dead and gone Latin.

Rhymed measures are many times more in amount than unrhymed, but yet is there such a family resemblance between them all that the palm of range and diversity must rest with the other group.

Either system alone would suffice for nearly all classes of poetry, but English, it is seen, is doubly rich.

In conclusion, though English yields to Greek in melody and tunefulness, yet, if it be borne in mind how much more vigorous expressiveness is the requirement for poetry than is simple warbling, it may be doubted whether English, as a poetic instrument, yields to any language under the sun, whether it does not even surpass all its rivals in this sphere, even as far as it does in promise of world-wide domination.

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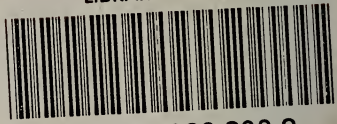
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